

ESCR CAG Meeting -- February 27, 2025
(via Zoom)

CAG members present

Frank Avila-Goldman Wendy Brawer Christine Datz-Romero Richard Heitler Trever Holland Ditashiah Kohn Dianne Lake Michael Marino Robin Schatell Shaheeda Smith Susan Steinberg

[Link to slide deck for this presentation](#)

ESCR Presentation

Desiree Gazzo, HNTB-LiRo

1. DDC Internship Program
 - a. 10-week program in Summer of 2025 for college (sophomore year and above) and graduate students majoring in engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, architectural technology, construction, construction management, construction technology, sustainable design, urban planning, urban studies, or city planning
 - b. Application due March 31, 2025
 - c. More info. here: <https://on.nyc.gov/3QHPLQV>
2. Overview of Contracts (*see slide 6*)
 - a. Similar to previous meetings
 - b. Delancey Street bridge is open
 - c. Ballfields 1 & 2 are open
 - d. Contractor working on amenities in the southern end and flood protection and utilities in the northern end
3. PA1 Construction Activities (*see updated map on slide 8*)
 - a. Floodwall, floodgate operations along Montgomery Street and the FDR Drive
 - b. Floodwall and utility work near Pier 42
 - c. Great progress in Corlears Hook Park
 - d. Esplanade paver installation and construction of amphitheater and basketball court
 - e. Ballfields 1 & 2 are open

- f. Road restoration work, including utility and sidewalk installation, near Delancey Street bridge (when weather is appropriate)
 - g. Tennis court construction and esplanade reconstruction
 - h. E. Houston Street retaining wall in progress
 - i. Test pits and deep sewer work in northern end where flood protection installation has begun
 - j. Ongoing utility and deep sewer work at E. 10th St.
 - k. Ongoing partial FDR lane closures continue at various locations for bridge work and utility installations.
- 4. PA1 Construction Photos (*see slides 9 and 10, 11*)
 - a. Utility work at E. 10th St.
 - b. Installation of floodwall sheeting at Ballfield 7
 - c. Concrete esplanade base installed near tennis court stepdown
 - d. Curb formwork in Corlears Hook Park near FDR Drive
 - e. Witch hazel beginning to bloom near Delancey Street Bridge
- 5. PA1 Picnic and BBQ Area illustration (*see slide 12*)
 - a. Areas shown: lawn/sod, shrub/perennial, and picnic tables with umbrellas (which are not directly under the bridge)
- 6. PA1 What We've Heard
 - a. Spring amenity openings: in progress; more updates forthcoming
 - b. East River Park Greenway (separate project from ESCR): DDC conceptual design still in progress
 - i. *Kristen Cawthorn, DDC*: We updated the alignment of the flyover bridge along the FDR to a greenway along the water. We are currently preparing for the release of the RFQ (Request for Qualifications) in the first quarter of 2025. It is a design-build project. That will be followed by an RFP. We anticipate a team getting on board by the first quarter of 2026. As we continue with the procurement process, we'll have more information, and we'll keep the CAG and other stakeholders updated.
 - ii. Moving forward, this will be presented to the community boards as a separate agenda item.
- 7. PA1 Environmental Monitoring Locations (*see slide 15*)
- 8. PA1 AQM January Update (*see slide 17*)
 - a. Most exceedances were between 15 and 25 minutes long.
 - b. On one day there were some construction activities that caused longer alerts, but the PM daily value did not surpass the PEL for the month.
 - c. Offsite activities were responsible for two of the exceedances.
- 9. PA1 Ballfields 7 & 8: Local Law 72

- a. During routine testing of ten soil samples from Ballfields 7 & 8, two were found to contain hazardous levels of lead.
- b. There is no exposure to park users or nearby residents.
- c. Hazardous soil remains underground and undisturbed.
- d. When removal of lead soil is scheduled, the ESCR team will notify the CAG, community board, and elected officials.
- e. For full reports, visit: [ESCR Environmental Monitoring](#), [DDC Lead in Soil](#)

10. ESCR Lead Discovery, Notification, and Mitigation Process (*see slide 18*)

- a. Throughout construction, soil samples are collected to analyze soil conditions and determine disposal methods.
- b. When the soil tests return with a lead reading greater than 5.00 mg/L, the Local Law 72 procedure is initiated.
- c. Generally, soil is left in the ground, undisturbed, and away from the public. Much of the soil in the park is NYC typical urban fill from when the park was created. Typical urban fill is found all over NYC.

11. PC Construction Activities (*see slide 20*)

- a. Location 1 – Jackson St. & Water St. & Corlears Hook Park
 - i. Daytime road closures at Jackson St. for utility relocation in preparation for deep sewer installation
 - ii. Utility relocation
 - iii. Soldier pile installation
- b. Location 2 – Delancey St. S & Lewis St.
 - i. Utility relocation
 - ii. Test pits
- c. Location 3 – Delancey St. N & Baruch Dr.
 - i. Utility relocation
 - ii. Test pits
- d. Location 4 – E. Houston St. & Columbia St.
 - i. Electric relocation
- e. Location 5 – Avenue C & E. 18th
 - i. Con Ed utility relocation
 - ii. Test pits
- f. Location 6 – Avenue C, E. 20th to E. 23rd
 - i. Electric relocation

12. PC Advisories at E. Houston St. & Columbia St. (*see slide 21*)

- a. Facilitates electric utility relocation
- b. Ongoing until further notice
- c. Temporary Bus Stop Relocation
 - i. Impacting M14D-SBS and M21 bus stop at E. Houston St. & Columbia St.
 - ii. Please board at E. Houston St. and Baruch Dr.
 - iii. Facilitates electric utility relocation
- d. Potential Parking Limitations on Columbia St.

- i. Still to be confirmed, pending field investigation
- ii. Would impact NW corner of Columbia St.
- iii. Advisory will be posted to website

13. PC Construction Photos (see slide 22)

- a. Conduit installation in Columbia St.
- b. Con Ed manhole installation in E. Houston St.
- c. Con Ed cable removal in E. 20th St.

14. PA2 Construction Progress (see slide 23)

- a. Asser Levy Playground is open.
- b. Stuyvesant Cove Park is open, but the North entrance at E. 23rd St. is closed for EDC Solar One construction work.
- c. Murphy Brothers Playground is open.

15. PA2 Flood Infrastructure Handover

- a. DDC will formally hand over operation of PA2 flood infrastructure to DEP within the next week.
 - i. Includes floodwalls and floodgates between E. 15th Street and E. 25th Street
 - ii. Inquiries related to maintenance and operation can be sent to: manhattandep@dep.nyc.gov
 - iii. ESCR Community Engagement team will continue providing updates and responding to inquiries as punch list continues
 - iv. Formal notification will be sent to elected officials, CB3 and CB6, and the CAG when complete

16. ESCR Website Resources – several have been updated (see slide 25)

- a. Second half 2024 newsletter published: <https://on.nyc.gov/411VyFF>
- b. Project Factsheets and “What’s Going On Here?” informational sheets: <https://on.nyc.gov/4hH237I>
- c. DDC videos about key construction activities posted to Gallery page: <https://on.nyc.gov/4jZuX4C>
- d. Work With Us page reorganized: <https://on.nyc.gov/4kcqxJ7>

Q & A

Frank: I appreciate what your team has done to work out some of the issues related to PC (parallel conveyance) at Water Street. With regard to the picnic areas, please make sure there are enough trash receptacles. There was a BMCR opening this past week, and there was a presentation on the flip-up gates. After that, there were a lot of questions about the process. Can you restate who would be handling the floodgate tie-ins underneath the FDR and moving up to the corner of South Street and Montgomery?

Who would it turn over to? We're nervous about anything involving DEP with all the different cuts that are forthcoming. We would like the process for testing and what would happen in the event of a major storm surge reiterated.

Desiree: We'll make a note of the trash receptacles and see what that area calls for. There was a press release for the BMCR's flip-up gates, and we'll be posting some information on that on the website, including a video that shows the flip-up gates in operation. All of the flood protection elements—the floodgates, the floodwall—will be handed over to DEP's resiliency unit as they are completed.

Marty Fatooh, Manhattan Borough Commissioner for DEP: We had a demonstration of the floodgates on Monday. That is being handed over to us; our Bureau of Coastal Resiliency will be the DEP unit handling that. Deputy Commissioner Laurian Farrell will be overseeing that. Your concern about funding is valid; I'm happy to offline about that with you. DEP has been working closely with its partner agencies including DDC to ensure a seamless transition on this.

Trever: We took a tour of Pier 42 a while ago and noticed that a lot of the plants are not surviving. The landscape architect said that while the attempt was to use native plants, the term may not apply anymore because New York has changed a lot. A lot of the plants designated as native have not survived due to our new climate. How are the plants—other than the ones you took a picture of—surviving, and are you seeing the same problem? Also, could we see a picture of the shade umbrellas? In other places we've been told that they couldn't put shade umbrellas for various reasons, but it's nice to see that they're available here. Are there grills near the picnic tables?

Desiree: We can direct everyone to the map that shows the grill locations; they're closer to the esplanade area. The shade umbrellas are in the PDC¹ presentation, so we could provide those pages and links. Regarding the plants, we just started planting them last fall. We will follow up with our landscape team, but it seems that the plants are doing very well. Not all the plant materials we're using are native due to the climate changes we're having. It's probably a little early to report on how the plants are doing, but the ones in PA2 are doing very well, and we'll keep an eye on the new plants and report back in the spring.

Trever: We've been trying to get plant identification markers for each of the planting areas to help with stewardship. We've been trying to get that for Pier 42; we're getting a little pushback from Parks, but I hope we're able to also get it for East River Park

Desiree: We'll pass this along to Parks.

Wendy: I'm concerned about the width of the esplanade. It seems like there's tables, and step-down areas, and fencing. How wide is it?

Desiree: I don't know the width offhand; we'll have to get back to you.

Wendy: I assume the new East River Greenway is going to attach to the park at around 13th street.

¹ Public Design Commission

Desiree: We don't have those details as preliminary design hasn't started yet. That's a separate project that will be reported on by DDC when they have more information.

Wendy: the design calls for basketball courts in this area. Please coordinate so the new alignment doesn't require the new construction to be ripped up in a year or two.

Wendy: I'm also concerned about some of the depth of fill that are listed on that map. It seems like the section at about 10th Street going north has three or five feet of fill, yet that's the lowest section of the park. You can see straight across into Riis Houses. Why isn't there more being built up there?

Desiree: The park's highest point is at Houston Street, and then it tapers down and then the flood walls take over on the edges. We can resurface the maps that shows where the park is raised and where the floodwalls are.

Wendy: It would be great to know how high the wall is. It would also be good to have a view of the elevations in the south end of the park.

Desiree: The PDC presentations do a good job of showing where the walls are; you can see the walls almost disappear where the changes in grade are. We can provide more resources on that.

Wendy: We heard that 6,000 truck trips have been avoided; what percent of the fill material has already been delivered?

Desiree: We can try and get that number for you.

Wendy: On slide 24, when is the plastic that's over the movable gates in PA2 getting removed?

Marty Fatooh, Manhattan Borough Commissioner for DEP: I'll take that question back and get back to you.

Wendy: Are we going to get fast-growing grasses this year?

Desiree: They planted a diversity of plants, grasses, and ground covers which grow at different rates and have different ornamental and pollinator qualities.

Wendy: In the fall of 2023, you gave us a chart showing when things would be completed. We haven't seen one of those in over a year now.

Desiree: As soon as we get the spring amenity opening schedule, we'll update the chart.

Dianne: I have a question about the designs that are in progress for the greenway and its connection to the north end of the park. Will the CAG be able to see and comment on those designs before they're finalized?

Desiree: It will go through the regular community board (3 and 6) process.

Dianne: So we as the CAG will have to remind people to go to those meetings in order to see and comment.

Robin: Can you bring up the photo of the picnic area (*slide 12*)? The BBQ stations are going to be spread throughout the park? And is this the only area with picnic tables in the park?

Desiree: No, there are several areas with picnic tables and several areas with BBQ stations.

Robin: I don't see a lot of trees around those green lawns.

Desiree: There are trees, but they're difficult to see in these illustrations. In the past few CAG presentations (that are [online](#)) you can see photos taken on the ground of the tree progress.

Christine: Are there any Fireboat House updates?

Desiree: No, not yet. They're still in the process of reviewing the comments.

CAG-only Portion

Paula: I'd like to start us off by reminding people that after last month's meeting I shared a Google document for people to enter examples of shade structures that might work at the park, and a couple of you did. Should we allow for a little more time for people to share more examples?

Robin: Yes, please.

Michael: My impression was that we were providing examples for shade at dugouts at the ballfields.

Dianne: I think we were thinking about shade structure for the park more generally.

Paula: And is there still interest in having a conversation about where these shade structures should go?

Dianne: Yes.

Michael: I heard the comments about the new picnic area looking congested, but the old picnic area was even less spacious with the tables on top of each other.

Shaheeda: I agree that it looks better than the old set-up. We don't mind 75 people being around us because that's how you know the food is good.

Meeting ended at approximately 4:54 pm.