

ESCR CAG Meeting -- January 22, 2025
(via Zoom)

CAG members present

Frank Avila-Goldman Wendy Brawer Ditashiah Kohn Dianne Lake Michael Marino Robin Schatell
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[Link to slide deck for this presentation](#)

ESCR Presentation

Ethan Kraft, HNTB-LiRo

1. Employment Resources – Community Tabling
 - a. Tuesday, January 27, 2026 1:00pm to 3:00pm (drop in any time)
 - b. Henry Street Settlement – Jobs Plus on 24 Avenue D, Ground Floor
 - c. Hosted by ESCR team, Jobs Plus, NYCHA REES
 - d. Information on local hiring programs, job resources, and training opportunities in the Lower East Side

2. ESCR – Employment Resources
 - a. Virtual Quarterly Information Session Tuesday, February 24, 2026 from 11:00am to 12:00pm
 - i. Hosted by ESCR team
 - ii. Information on local hiring programs, job resources, labor unions and training opportunities
 - iii. Register at <http://tiny.cc/escrwwus26>
 - b. DDC Summer Internship Program
 - i. Geared towards students (sophomore through grad school) in architecture, engineering, design, construction management, safety, and project controls
 - ii. 10-week program runs June 1 through August 7, 2026
 - iii. Application deadline is March 31, 2026
 - iv. For more information: <https://on.nyc.gov/3LHs1gM>
 - c. Henry Street Settlement Workforce Development
 - i. For more information, visit the Henry Street Customized Staffing [website](#) or review our [January 2026](#) CB3 Parks presentation.

3. PA1 Construction Activities (*see map on slide 12*)
 - a. Floodwall and floodgate operations. Utility work.
 - b. Construction of Parks maintenance & tennis buildings. Utility work.
 - c. Esplanade reconstruction, E. Houston Street retaining wall activities.
 - d. Excavation and clean fill installation

- e. Deep sewer work, floodwall construction, and excavation.
 - f. Utility work and sewer installation. Preparation for E. 13th Street floodwall construction.
 - g. Phase 1 amenities OPEN. Punch list items (to be presented in February).
 - h. Ongoing partial FDR lane closures continue at various locations for bridge work and utility installations
4. PA1 - E. 10th Street - E. 14th Street areas
- a. Pile installation adjacent to NYCHA Riis will be noisy and disruptive.
 - i. Anticipated within next 1-2 months: installation of floodwall piles near E. 13th Street. This operation must take place at night as required by DOT for FDR Drive lane closures.
 - ii. Anticipated around March: Bridge piles will be installed during daytime hours.
 - iii. Vibration monitors are in place inside NYCHA buildings.
 - iv. We are in regular contact with NYCHA management and TA leaders. Virtual meeting for tenants will be scheduled in advance.
 - v. Aim to provide as much advance notice as possible for nightwork when dates are finalized. (Advisories to come)
 - b. Anticipated second half of year: full FDR Drive closures will be required for floodgate construction and E. 10th Street bridge placement.
5. PA1 Construction Photos (*see slides 14 to 16*)
- a. Manhole basin installed adjacent to FDR Drive and Riis Houses
 - b. Hand-excavating around utility lines in vicinity of FDR Drive and Riis Houses
 - c. Micropile operation at E. Houston Street
 - d. Combi-wall Micropile operation at E. Houston Street – January 2026 installation at north end of site
 - e. Work area near E. 6th Street bridge
6. PA1 What We've Heard
- a. Compost Yard: Project team to present at CB3 Parks on February 12.
 - b. Trees Relocated to Corlears Hook Park: Warranty (two years) on trees restarted when trees were transplanted.
 - c. Fields 3 & 4 Surface: Synthetic turf. Fields 5, 6, 7 are natural grass.
 - d. Soil Reporting Requirements: Lead reporting is required per Local Law 72. Other soil reports must be requested via FOIL process.
 - e. Road Conditions Near Con Edison: Shared with DOT, will provide any updates.
 - f. Future work in vicinity of Gouverneur Gardens / Montgomery Street floodwall:
 - i. Major Con Edison coordination is complete, though some minor work may continue.
 - ii. Utility and manhole work anticipated at the intersection of South Street and Montgomery Street.
7. Environmental and Air Quality Monitoring (AQM)
- a. PA1 AQM Locations (*see map on page 20*)
 - b. December 2025 AQM Update
 - i. It was a relatively quiet month, with no alerts above 30 minutes. This was partially thanks to the cold and the lower winds.

- ii. In all the cases where construction vehicles were responsible for increased detections from the monitor, dust mitigation techniques were applied.
- 8. PC Construction Activities (*see map on page 23*)
 - a. Location 1 – Jackson St. & Corlears Hook Park (Water St. and South St. complete)
 - i. Sewer installation
 - b. Location 2 – Lewis St. & Delancey St. S
 - i. Sewer installation
 - c. Location 3 – Baruch Dr. & Delancey St. N
 - i. Secant pile installation
 - ii. Sewer installation
 - d. Location 4 – E. Houston St. & Columbia St.
 - i. Utility relocation
 - ii. Sewer installation
 - e. Location 5 – Avenue C & E. 18th
 - i. Excavation for test pit
 - ii. Utility relocation
 - iii. Water main
 - f. Location 6 – Avenue C, E. 20th to E 23rd
 - i. Test pits
 - ii. Utility relocation
- 9. PC | Work in Vicinity of Williamsburg Bridge
 - a. Activities related to deep sewer installation underway on Lewis St. & Delancey St. South.
 - i. Includes deep excavations for PC sewer
 - ii. Started September 2025, anticipated to continue until March 2026
 - iii. Vibration monitors in place
 - b. Sewer work on Baruch Dr. and Delancey St. North is underway and anticipated to continue for 5-7 months.
- 10. PC Construction Photos (*see slide 25*)
 - a. Secant pile installation at Delancey St. S and Baruch Dr.
 - b. Excavation for deep manhole at Delancey St. S and Baruch Dr.
 - c. Deep manhole at Delancey St. S and Baruch Dr.
- 11. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. Thursday, February 12, 2026 -- CB3 Parks: ESCR Compost Facility update
 - b. Thursday, February 26, 2026 -- CAG Meeting #66
 - c. March 2026 -- CB3 Parks: ESCR / BMCR update

Q & A

Dianne: Do you know when there will be further updates about progress on the esplanade north of where it's open now? Or if there will be a way for people who live in the north (like me) to access the esplanade without having to go down all the way to Delancey?

Ethan: Those are good specific questions, so I'll take them back and see if we can get an update. I am less optimistic about access from your area than I am about the

esplanade near the area that's already open, but I'll try to see what the timelines for those areas look like.

Dianne: Yeah, and when there might be a more significant update from the contractors just so we have some sense about how long it will take.

Wendy: I've been getting complaints about lights being left on at the ballfields.

Ethan: Yes, we recently made a switch from temporary to permanent power, and there was an issue with the timers that turn off the lights. The situation should have been resolved by now, but if that's not the case let me know.

CAG-Only

Paula: A few of us met with Parks two days ago to get insight on how the funding process works. Can a CAG member who was there share some of the main takeaways from the meeting?

Dianne: Parks was really helpful in telling us the different ways we could advocate for shade funding or even raise the funding ourselves – and in explaining the obstacles. So far, we've been focusing on the traditional process of reaching out to elected officials. Parks said that elected officials are very supportive and have been working with Parks, and they expect that to continue. In addition to the fact that the regular funding process takes forever – it could be years before we see results – there is a five-year embargo on capital spending at East River Park. In order for anything that's more than minimally intrusive to be done, we'd have to get a waiver from OMB even for something as simple as installing a pole to support a shade structure.

The other alternative is to raise funds privately. There's the Adopt-a-Park program that allows benefactors to raise money, hire a contractor, pay for the work, and then turn over the results to Parks. That typically involves expenditures of more than \$10,000, but that's how we've gotten basketball courts renovated. That was done at Tompkins Square Park, and it was done in collaboration with Councilmember Rivera's office. We can also look into the possibility of raising money that would buy something we want to install (such as a spray mister), and we would arrange to have them installed with Parks doing overtime. They encouraged us to look at installing more umbrellas because they're cheap, easy to procure and install, and wouldn't trigger these capital funding "gotchas." They did not have any insight into our other request to incorporate shade structures in the northern end of the park. They said that's a "change request," and they're already running late so they're not going to want to do that.

So, they're open to a lot of different ideas and collaborating with us, but those are the paths we'd have to take to raise money and get the work done. Does anyone else who was at the meeting have anything to add?

Wendy: If we have something donated, the timeline is much faster. The spray misters by the big turf field were not in the plan; they were added. And they're pretty cheap, so that gives me hope for the north end. Also, I feel we need to have a hat campaign and encourage people to bring their hat to the park; maybe we can get a sponsor. Umbrellas are for passive shade; most people in the park tend to move, not stay still.

Dianne: I'll add that we raised the question of Parks stewardship. Last summer Partnership for Parks notified all their partners that there would be no official activities in July or August due to

extreme heat. This year they're rolling that back. There will be weeding and other events in East River Park and Pier 42, and Parks expects to be able to bring movable shelters with them so there'd be water and shade in parts of the park where there's no tree canopy yet. Parks was forthright about the fact that it's going to be 10 to 15 years before there's a tree canopy. I think one of DDC's arguments against shade structures is that by the time they're installed, there will be natural shade.

Michael: The only thing to add is that for the Adopt-a Park option, they'd have to pay for the item *and* the installation.

Dianne: Yes, they mentioned that there's a cue of priorities that are set by Parks, community organizations, and community boards. If you want things to move faster, then you're not only paying for the item you want installed but for overtime for Parks to install it. That way they're spending Parks hours on the priorities that were set as a group, instead of letting someone who's paid go to the front of the line. That's fair.

Dianne: My question now is what are the next steps? Over the holidays I lost track of which electeds had responded to the letter and how.

Paula: The letter requesting \$500,000 for shade went to six elected officials, and we've heard back from four. CM Epstein's office is eager to help, so we can do a meeting with them because they had some follow-up questions. CM Marte's office said they're well aware of the issue and are including shade funding for the Participatory Budgeting process and in the capital funding request process. Assemblymember Lee's office said to fill out a form to start the capital funding request process. The new Manhattan Borough President's Office reached out and asked how they can help.

Michael: We should respond to CM Marte and let them know it has to be expense, not capital, funding. My hunch is that CM Powers gave Solar One expense, not capital, funding. We should probably have the same conversation with the Manhattan Borough President's Office and tell them it can only be done with expense funding. I don't know if they have expense funding; we've only ever gotten capital funding from them.

Dianne: For Pier 42, they told us that the warranty period is two years for plants, one year for anything that's built. Parks suggested taking advantage of that and allowing the contractor to do all the plant replacement because then it's free.

Wendy: Right, but is it really fast-growing grasses?

Dianne: Pier 42's warranty period is almost out, and Parks suggested waiting until then to do anything there. Many plants at Pier 42 didn't make it. As we near the end of the warranty period, it is the time to talk to gardeners, organizations, and the Ecology Center about whether something else should be planted there. We should ask the contractor whether we could advocate for replacement plants that better fit the space and that will be a tall grass instead of a shrub. That's another area we can dig into with them.

Michael: I would imagine that depends on the warranty. I do know that under warranty it's cheaper to let plants die and replace them than to water and maintain them.

Wendy: And when they replace them, is that another two-year period that they have to take care of them? Or does that mean that two years is up, and it's out of our hands?

Michael: I think it's the latter: for two years, they'll replace plants if they die.

Dianne: So, it sounds like we need to reach out to the electeds and clarify that it can't be capital funding and to answer questions that might be different from office to office about what we're looking for.

Wendy: From a health perspective, I wonder if they can post signage that suggests that people wear a hat in the park.

Michael: I think that at this point we should concentrate on the funding aspect and get back to the electeds that were interested to make sure they understand that this has to be expense, not capital, funding.

Dianne: Yes, and the other question is for the electeds – unlike CM Marte --- who are not saying “Just advocate, and we'll take it from there.” CM Epstein's office has been sending out a link to the funding portal to constituents and organizations. Who is their budget person? Is that what they would expect the CAG to do? Does it have to be a non-profit among us to apply, or does the CAG have enough standing? There are still a lot of unanswered questions about exactly how we do this.

Robin: What about the idea of a vendor who could rent umbrellas or chairs with covers to people in the park?

Michael: They specifically said in our meeting that they don't want umbrellas that can blow away.

Robin: What about chairs with covers?

Wendy: They'd have to have someone manage it.

Michael: So, Dianne, I'm not sure what CM Epstein is sending out. I'm assuming it's the same thing that Marte's office is sending out because now is the time when expense grant applications are due – on February 18. I'm not sure what CM Epstein's office means by “advocate for it.” Does he mean advocate to the Parks Department? If he wants to do it, he needs to do it on his own without our applying for it.

Dianne: Do we know who CM Epstein's budget director is?

Michael: I don't know; I only deal with CM Marte's office.

Frank: Do we have to specify the locations, or does that come after the money?

Marino: It comes after the funding is allocated.

Dianne: Paula, who responded from CM Epstein's office?

Paula: It was their constituent liaison.

Dianne: I think we should reach back out to them and ask, “Should we meet with you and tell you what we want, and you're going to work with Parks, or do we have to go through the formal process?” Because, you're right, Michael – the portal that they're using is the standard City Council budget portal.

Paula: Yes, I can reach back out to them.

Dianne: I live near their office, so it'd be easy to go over there and talk to them.

Michael: I don't wish that portal on anyone who doesn't have to use it.

Dianne: It looks like that would have to be done by a non-profit, not the CAG.

Michael: Typically, most offices have a supplemental form that you also have to fill out. You can also reach out to their budget director and have a meeting with them. Theoretically, Epstein's office should be doing the same.

Paula: Are there any other next steps?

Dianne: There will be a special state assembly election in the first week of February for Epstein's seat; we should reach out to whomever wins.

Michael: I'm not sure how a State Assemblyperson is going to be helpful other than helping us advocate for it. When we asked Assemblymember Grace Lee, we learned that they can't give a local entity funds.

Wendy: Did everyone hear that Tricia Shimamura will be the new Parks Commissioner?

Dianne: Yes, and that means we're getting a new Manhattan Parks Commissioner.

Wendy: I thought Terese Flores (of Parks) was very helpful, but I don't know quite what her role is.

Michael: Terese used to be our park manger, what Edwin (Rodriguez) is now. Now she's the boss of all the park managers in a certain district.

Dianne: I was told that she is going to stay closely involved with East River Park and Pier 42 because there's so much capital work left to be done on East River Park, and they didn't want to dump it all onto Edwin who's new and comes from a different the Parks department. So, she'll be on at least until the end of the project.

Wendy: I feel badly for people who live at Riis Houses because they have all that work coming into their front yard. And as soon as the park is done, then they'll start on the over-water greenway, so they'll have years of construction outside their door.

Dianne: Well, they do meet with Riis regularly so they're doing what they can to help keep people informed, and ultimately, I think people will be happy to have that floodwall finished.

Meeting ended at 4:54 pm.