

ESCR CAG Meeting -- November 20, 2025
(via Zoom)

CAG members present

Christine Datz-Romero
Ditashiah Evans
Kathryn Freed (substitute for Wendy Brawer)
Ayo Harrington
Richard Heitler
Trever Holland
Dianne Lake
Michael Marino
Robin Schatell
Susan Steinberg

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

ESCR Presentation

Ethan Kraft, HNTB-LiRo

1. PA1 Construction Activities (*see map on slide 10*)
 - a. Floodwall and floodgate operations
Preparation for removal of temporary Corlears Hook bridge
 - b. Parks & Maintenance building, Tennis building construction.
 - c. Esplanade reconstruction, E. Houston Street retaining wall activities. Excavation and clean fill installation.
 - d. Track, esplanade, E. 6th Street bridge, E. Houston Street entry closed for construction. Deep sewer work, floodwall construction, and excavation.
 - e. Utility work. **Preparation for E. 13th Street floodwall construction**
 - f. Phase 1 amenities OPEN, including Pier 42 access and Corlears Hook Bridge. Punch list items.
 - g. Ongoing partial FDR lane closures continue at various locations for bridge work and utility installations
2. PA1 Temporary Delancey Bridge Closure: Monday, December 1 – Friday, December 5
 - a. Necessary to accommodate installation of permanent railing for the bridge ramp and staircase
 - b. Access to and exit from East River Park will remain via the Corlears Hook Bridge (access to bridge via Cherry Street)
 - c. Wayfinding signage will be displayed in next few days
3. PA1 Floodwall Mobilization at E. 13th Street
 - a. Mobilization of construction equipment ongoing
 - b. As early as Q1 2026:
 - i. Pile installation for floodwalls will begin west of the FDR Drive (**daytime work**)

- ii. Piles will need to be installed across the FDR Drive
 - 1. Due to closures, **DOT requires that we perform this work at night**
 - iii. **This operation is expected to be noisy and disruptive**
- c. ESCR team is communicating regularly with NYCHA RII residents & management

4. PA1 Construction Photos from November (see *slides 13-15*)

- a. Removing overhead signage (top), bridge rigged with straps (bottom)
- b. Temporary bridge span lifted by crane
- c. Temporary bridge span placed in construction area south of amphitheater
- d. Utility congestion at E. 14th Street
- e. Clean fill unloaded from barge via crane
- f. Regulator chamber construction near Track area
- g. Concrete placement for esplanade north of Tennis Courts

5. PA1 What We've Heard

- a. Construction Road / Former Shared Use Path
 - i. Most areas will be accessible by cyclists, but some are designated for Parks M&O (Maintenance and Operations)
- b. Plant Warranty Period
 - i. For shrubs, grasses, perennials, warranty begins after turnover
 - ii. For trees, warranty begins after Parks Forestry inspection
- c. Shade Strategy (*Luc Alicea of NYC Parks*) 8:05
 - i. We recently had a meeting with some CAG members about the need for shade in the interim period while the trees grow in. Following up on idea for a temporary art exhibit that could provide shade, there is no process for funding within Parks for this, but there are non-profits and other gov't agencies who have these types of programs. This is my last time at a CAG meeting, so moving forward, I direct all future Parks-related matters to Terese Flores who's here tonight.

6. PA1 Project Status

- a. 42% of East River Park is currently open to the community, following full transition to phase 2 in September 2025.
- b. Implementing flood protection is central to the project.
- c. Investigations into underground conditions are ongoing, and team is working to mitigate impacts of unforeseen obstructions, including high levels of historical construction and demolition debris.
- d. Timeline is still being fully assessed to incorporate solutions to field conditions, and the Contractor anticipates providing this update by end of year.
- e. We will return to CB3 Parks on December 11 with update.

7. Environmental Reporting and Air Quality Monitoring

- a. Monitoring locations in PA1: most of them are north of the tennis courts where construction is happening (see *map on slide 20*)
- b. October 2025 Update – good despite being windy; there were just a few alerts

8. PA1 Lead Discovery, Notification, and Mitigation (see *slides 22-23*)

- a. During routine testing of soil samples from Phase 2 construction areas, several have been found to contain hazardous levels of lead.

- b. There is no exposure to park users or nearby residents.**
- c. Hazardous soil has been excavated and is safely stored and covered on site while offsite approvals are finalized.
- d. When soil is transported for disposal off site, the ESCR team will notify the community board, elected officials, CAG, and NYCHA
- e. For full reports, including detailed maps visit: [ESCR Environmental Monitoring, DDC Lead in Soil](#)
- f. Standard process for when soil tests find that there is more than 5 mg of lead per liter per liter (per Local Law 72):
 - i. Throughout construction, soil samples are collected to analyze soil conditions and determine disposal methods.
 - ii. When the soil tests return with a lead reading greater than 5.00 mg/L, the Local Law 72 procedure is initiated.
 - iii. 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.

9. PC Construction Progress

- a. Location 1 – Jackson St., Water St., South St. & Corlears Hook Park
 - i. Utility relocation
 - ii. Sewer installation
- b. Location 2 – Lewis St. & Delancey St. S
 - i. Secant pile installation
 - ii. Sewer installation
- c. Location 3 – Baruch Dr. & Delancey St. N
 - i. Test pit
 - ii. Utility relocation
 - iii. Sewer installation
- d. Location 4 – E. Houston St. & Columbia St.
 - i. Utility relocation
 - ii. Sewer installation to start soon
- 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

10. PC Construction photos (see slide 26)

- a. Manhole construction at Jackson St. and Water St.
- b. Secant pile installation at Delancey St. S and Baruch
- c. Excavation for PC sewer in Lewis Street
- d. Interceptor sewer test pit at E. 20th Street

Q & A

Michael: There was discussion last month around the plantings for what's open already in Corlears Hook Park. I want to make sure the plan is to continue that all the way down once the parallel conveyance work is done.

Ethan: I will look at the planting plan for that, and I owe you an email about the planting along the FDR Drive that's already open.

Michael: What is the plan for the leftover open space from the relatively small maintenance facility being built at end of Grand Street? Will it be parking for Parks Dept. vehicles, and if so, does that mean that their vehicles that are currently parked on the sidewalks in Corlears will go there?

Ethan: I will defer to Parks for the second part of your question. There will be parking for Parks' maintenance vehicles and electric vehicle chargers for Parks' EVs in the leftover space.

Terese (NYC Parks): I can find out (the second part of Michael's question).

Kathryn: Luc, at CB3 you mentioned the watering system failing. Does the warranty not kick in until after it's turned over? What will happen to the plants that died? Will they be replaced, or does the City have to replace them?

Luc: I was talking about our winterization efforts that will be happening in the next month to turn all of the water off. There have been some irrigation issues that have been resolved. The contractor is obligated to replace any plants that are dead in the 18 months after the turnover. We've been using detailed maps in our work with the contractor that differentiates different areas in the park by turnover date and warranty period. There will be a walk-through about a month before any of those warranty periods ending to make sure we get a 100% return to what it ought to be if anything fails.

Kathryn: I'm assuming that by that time the water will be working so there won't be a similar problem?

Luc: The irrigation system is generally working right now though there have been some hiccups and troubleshooting, and some features aren't installed yet.

Terese: The other day we walked through how we'll winterize next year when it belongs to us. The contractor just winterized the park. We're keeping a close watch on the plants that died and why they did, and we're trying to replace them with plants that will survive and do well.

Dianne: I have questions about the Parks forestry inspection of the trees. When does that typically happen? Is it only once when the new space gets turned over to you? Is someone keeping track of that? Luc, you just mentioned that there's an inspection just before the warranty period runs out to make sure you're aware of the current state. How does all that work with the trees and the forestry inspection?

Luc: Prior to the turnover we have a subject matter expert for every amenity do an inspection. That includes electricians, plumbers, and our forestry division who would have done a pre-inspection where they would have annotated, say, a tree pit with a failed planting – that didn't hold up the opening of that section of the park. That kind of thing is captured prior to the turnover, and then there will be a minimum of one additional inspection prior to the warranty end period for trees and shrubs. The goal is not to wait until the warranty period to replace or fill in trees that never made it. The next iteration of planting is in September, and the ESCR team is already talking about not just putting trees in new areas that they're planning on turning over but to remedy existing issues.

Dianne: Great; thanks. There's a restroom facility planned for just north of Field 2. Right now, there's a hilly planting bed there with some trees. Will they have to be removed, and are they reusable somewhere else in the park? Those birch trees are really nice.

Luc: Half of the answer is "we'll have to get back to you," but the last I saw is that they might have to move one or two trees as part of that. Most of the footprint is going to be in

that grassy area that's there. They're still finalizing precisely where things will go based on precise architectural requirements.

Therese: We're considering moving a few of those trees to Corlears Hook Park; once we get an update on that, I can bring it back.

CAG-Only

Paula: Let's discuss the ongoing shade topic. We did a walk-through with some CAG members a few weeks ago, Assemblymember Lee's Community Relations Director was there and said they might have some capital funding that the CAG could apply for. We should think about what types of structures would be appropriate and locations that the CAG would prioritize for them.

Dianne: One thing we talked about was Parks' concerns that they want us to keep in mind. In certain places, nothing heavy can be anchored into the ground due to underground infrastructure (electricity, water, the floodwall) because that would void the infrastructure warranties. They also prefer things that don't have a lot of moving parts because that requires time and maintenance; this includes shade sails. We didn't get guidance about areas that would be forbidden for installing something due to underground infrastructure. We might have to make the first move about where we'd like to see shade.

Michael: Friends of Corlears has applied for capital funding and discretionary funding from government officials before. We don't need the specific solution, but we could show examples. The money would get earmarked for Parks who would then figure it out. Friends of Corlears also applied for capital funding from the Borough President's office, and it was arduous. I can help with that if need be. I'm not sure if we would just send Assemblymember Lee a letter or if we'd have to go through the arduous portal. If they allocate funding it might sit in the City's budget, and we may not get shade structures right away. However, in the meantime if the warranties expire, maybe we could install them in a wider variety of places. To get back to Paula's question about location, we should focus on the dugouts.

Robin: I'm not surprised about the hurdles.

Michael: Here's an example of when we got capital funding for dog run renovation (at Corlears Hook Park). It took three cycles; three fiscal years of capital funding had to be raised before Parks would do something. They wait for all the money to be raised to even scope out the project.

Christine: Not to get bogged down in technicalities, Michael's correct. Capital money moves slowly. If we went to Assemblymember Lee it would go through a state process. It would behoove us to be as specific as possible about what we want and how much it costs so we don't have to raise more money year after year. I suggest that we ask all of our electeds to chip in if we have a project and we know how much it's going to cost. Not to change the subject, but Luc has hinted to "lessons learned" from this topic. Maybe we should advocate for changes in the northern part (currently closed and under construction) since we know it will lack shade. We could proactively intervene now to change that.

Robin: I brought that up at the last meeting, but I'm not sure if it's Parks or DDC. Are these structures that should be designed in/incorporated now to the northern end park? Is that a DDC question for Desiree?

Dianne and Michael: I would think it is.

Dianne: Ethan said at CB3 that they're struggling with construction and waterfront debris in the ground up there. Delays up there might be happening, so now would be the time to ask them about what's going to go on the surface once they're done with the time-consuming fill and deep sewer work. That could provide lead time to propose some changes.

Robin: Just a reminder that at the Union Square playground on 14th, they had to put in shade structures as an afterthought, so this is not new to them.

Paula: I will reach out to Desiree and ask about the northern section. What should we do about the open areas? I heard Michael saying that we don't have to be specific, and Christine made a case for specificity. Does anyone have a proposal?

Michael: What I was trying to say is that we don't have to be specific about what type of shade structures we want because it will be up to Parks, but we can point out the areas that we think are most important.

Christine: I was trying to say that if we propose something that costs one million dollars, let's tell our elected officials upfront instead of having to apply for more money year after year. That just delays the whole project.

Michael: The way a standard capital project would work is that Parks would give us an estimate so we would know how much to ask for. It typically takes more than one year to get the amount because you can't really ask an elected for a huge amount in one fell swoop since they have to spread the wealth around each fiscal year.

Kathryn: We should ask all the elected officials, including the Borough President. Cobbling together resources could make it get done quicker.

Michael: Do we know from Assemblymember Lee's office how we have to apply?

Paula: I will reach out to her staffer Fannie to ask that.

Dianne: Also, if there are any guidelines about what people typically ask for in a situation like this and what we might be able to expect. We don't have an estimate of what it would cost to put shade structures in all the places we'd love to have them in the southern part of the park. It might take us a while to get that information. Guidelines about what we can expect from an individual Councilmember's office could give us a sense of what we'd have to cobble together to get what we want.

Michael: Can we also Solar One about how they got money?

Paula: I'll reach out to Dina.

John Blasco (U.S. Representative Dan Goldman): Congress doesn't allow us to fund parks. It might be helpful to see what shade structures exist around the boroughs as examples and to get price estimates for them from the Parks Department. It might be good to start having conversations with electeds now to put it on their radar, including incoming Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal.

Max (CM Marte): Our budget director has been talking to Parks. Paula, should I connect them to you? I can't commit to anything now, but we're aware of this and have been talking internally about it. The CAG should apply to all of the relevant electeds so each can chip in.

Dianne: Do we still have the document we a few of us worked on where we went through the different areas of the park and identified important areas for shade like the children's play area. That might be a good place to restart the conversation of where we're asking for shade and what we want there.

Paula: I'll look for it.

Christine: I think prioritizing where we want shade is probably a good idea also.

Dianne: I think this document was very aspirational; we'll need to take another look and prioritize.

Paula: Here are the next steps: reaching out to Desiree about shade for the northern end, to Dina about how Stuy Cove Park got funding for shade, and to Assemblymember Lee's office about how to apply for funding; sharing the map of the park that we annotated with our wishes for where shade structures should go. Is there anything else for next steps?

Robin: I would just say that we should make the ask big and prioritize after. Let them come back with counter-proposal.

Dianne: We should try to talk about this again before the December CAG which is close the holidays. Let's work on this offline.

Paula: Yes, I'll schedule a meeting for early December.

Michael: If we apply through the typical yearly cycle the applications are due to the passport system in February, and someone has to be registered for that system. Theoretically Friends of Corlears Hook Park could make the request since what we're asking for is an earmark in the Parks Department budget.

Christine: We've registered in the passport system before. The process can get convoluted really fast. The easiest way would be for Parks to be proactive and ask for that money, and we would advocate for it.

Kathryn: What about an art installation for shade? Is there a concept for this?

Robin: We were talking about getting an artist to create and design a shade structure. It was just an idea for a way to involve the Department of Cultural Affairs' public art program/Percent for Art to try to get funding.

Dianne: Wendy suggested it; we didn't dig in that far. You could talk to Wendy about what she was imagining.

Kathryn: There are many programs like this that we could look into. If we say we're having a competition, they'll probably contact us.

Paula: If there's nothing else on this topic, I'll send out a Doodle poll to schedule a shade meeting for early December. 52:44

Michael: Regarding the second amendment to the Programmatic Agreement, are Christine and I signing on behalf of the CAG? Christine and I signed on behalf of our organizations. Not signing doesn't stop anything, but it doesn't mean we get less of a say in any future conversations.

Christine: What's our process to be authorized to sign on behalf of the CAG? A vote?

Michael: I thought we had the blessing to act on behalf of the CAG since they made us their representatives for the Programmatic Agreement.

Dianne: I also wondered what our process is. A CAG member who's not here tonight said to the group via email that we should keep the Fireboat House open, so I thought it might be good for all of the CAG members to vote to sign this to keep the process up front. Let's just send an explicit message to the CAG that we'll sign off unless someone objects by the end of next Tuesday.

Paula: I'll do that.

Kathryn: Security seems to be a problem in the park, and dogs are constantly on the grass. It doesn't seem to be addressed. The police can't access the park except at Corlears; it's something we might want to think about.

Dianne: Members of the community have been raising this at CB3 and the Parks Committee. Therese is aware of the situation, and Luc's been encouraging people to submit complaints to 311 so there's a documented trail. We had invited Luc to come back to CB3 to talk about PEP (Parks Enforcement Control) officer staffing and allocation. We should reach out to our new District Manager and/or Therese to see if someone else can come do that for us and might be able to talk to the CAG about it, too.

Kathryn: We don't have a dog run in the park other than at Corlears, and there are no plans for one which is a strange oversight. I keep bringing it up at CB3 Parks, but there doesn't seem to be much done about it. Maybe they could consider dog runs for the northern section.

Robin: They could at least put up signage.

Ayo: Maybe they didn't plan for more dog runs in East River Park because there's one not too far away at Tompkins Square Park, but so many people have dogs that it would be nice to have more.

Kathryn: At CB3 I was told that nobody wanted it.

Christine: Gulick Park is overrun with dogs; it's mind-boggling.

Robin: It would be nice to see Parks personnel in the playgrounds and parks.

Ayo: There should be signage.

Robin: I'm happy to write to Therese about it.

Meeting ended at approximately 5:15.