

ESCR CAG Meeting -- November 30, 2023
(via Zoom)

CAG members present

Wendy Brawer Christine Datz Romero Dov Goldman Richard Heitler Dianne Lake Michael Marino Sandy McKee Camille Napoleon Shaheeda Smith Susan Steinberg
--

DDC Presentation of Updates

Desiree Gazzo, HNTB-LiRo

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

Some of the answers to the questions that the CAG raised after the walk-through will be answered tonight, and we'll respond to the other ones before or at the next CAG meeting.

1. Hiring compliance
 - a. Announcements
 - i. Henry Street Settlement job fair on December 14th, 10 am – 1 pm
 - ii. Youth intern program at Henry Street Settlement covers wages for internships that run from January 2 – April 13, 2024: Contact Yulissa Balbuena at (929) 638-1139 for more info.
2. PA1 - Construction Progress (*see slide 8 for locations of the activities below*)
 - a. Esplanade removal activities along the waterfront. Deep sewer activities/pile install and park drainage work. Floodwall (Combi-wall) pre-drilling and installation. Fill material delivery by barge and placement onsite. Ballfields 1 and 2 under construction.
 - b. Delancey Street - pile install then footing excavation. We've reminded the contractor to keep that area tidier than it was in the beginning. Don't hesitate to reach out if there are still more concerns.
 - c. Construction for new Corlears Hook bridge
 - d. Passive lawn partial closure for utility work & esplanade work. February 2024 full closure for Delancey St. bridge staging.
 - e. Utility work around Montgomery Street & South Street.
 - f. Montgomery St. – Cherry St. Greenway floodwall activities.
 - g. E. Houston St. pile install. Pedestrian Detour Shift.
 - h. Slip ramps in use
 - i. E. 10th St. utility work in preparation for deep sewer work
 - j. Ongoing partial FDR lane closures continue at various locations
3. PA1 - Ballfields 1 and 2

- a. To open late spring 2024 (*See rendering on slide 9 and construction photo on slide 10*)
4. PA1 - Construction photos – Corlears Hook Bridge (*See construction photos on slide 11*)
 5. PA1 - Construction photos – Delancey Street Bridge (*See construction photo on slide 12*)
 - a. Will be staged in the passive lawn, February 2024
 - b. Overnight closure of FDR to roll constructed bridge into place, April/May 2024
 6. PA1 - Transition into Phase 2¹
 - a. In response to feedback from local stakeholders and elected officials, plans to begin work on the full phase 2 esplanade have been reevaluated. Instead, the contractor will begin the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 while maintaining 42% open space for park users. This work balances the needs of field and esplanade users and will begin winter 2023/24 when park use is not at peak instead of during summer 2024, when park use is at peak.
 7. PA1 - Transition into Phase 2 (*See Slides 14, 15, & 16 for maps/diagrams*)
 - a. Winter 2023/2024
 - i. Closure of ballfields #3 - 5 and esplanade in Reach G, after fall sports season ends.
 - b. Benefits
 - i. Majority of Phase 2 esplanade remains open.
 - ii. Contractor can perform critical sewer work in ballfield 5 while Phase 1 fill settles
 - c. Open Space Commitment
 - i. Contractor will continue to maintain 42% open space.
 - ii. To date, contractor has successfully managed to limit the impact to park so that 52%+ of the park has remained open.
 - iii. Ballfield 6 will remain open until additional Phase I areas reopen.
 - iv. The team continues to work with Parks to review pedestrian circulation and amenity availability throughout the park.
 - v. Parks is working with DOE on alternate field availability.
 - vi. Access to park to be maintained at E. Houston, E. 6th St., and E. 10th St.
 - vii. The Pier 42 upland park is scheduled to open in early 2024.
 - viii. Ballfields 1 and 2 scheduled to open late spring 2024
 8. PA1 - Transition into Phase 2 – Open Space (*See slide 16 for maps/diagrams*)
 - a. Currently
 - i. Open space: 22.1 acres/55%
 - ii. Closed: 18.1 acres/45%
 - b. Transition to Ballfields 3, 4, 5
 - i. Open space: 17.0 acres/42.3%
 - ii. Closed: 23.2 acres/57.7%
 - c. Transition to Ballfields 3,4,5 with 1 & 2 open
 - i. Open Space 19.9 acres/49.5%
 - ii. Closed 20.3 acres/50.5%
 9. PA1 - Transition into Phase 2 - Recap
 - a. Early 2024 – Anticipated opening of Pier 42 upland

¹ Subject to change

- b. Late Spring 2024 – Scheduled opening of Corlears Hook Park Cherry Hill & flagpole area
 - c. Late Spring 2024 – Scheduled opening of ballfields 1 & 2 in Phase 1
 - d. Summer 2024 – Original start of transition into Phase 2
10. PA1 - What We've Heard – Questions from CAG PA1 walk-through
- a. IPC litter: will be disposed of properly and not buried. The contractors are responsible for maintaining the site and waste management.
 - b. Personal vehicles
 - i. Environmental impacts of vehicular traffic were analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement which can be found on the ESCR website: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/escr/about/environmental-review.page>
 - ii. The contractor's robust air quality monitoring program monitors air quality all around the site regardless of if air quality alerts are caused by construction activities, construction vehicles, personal vehicles, or other sources. More information can be found on the ESCR air quality monitoring page: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/escr/project-updates/environmental-monitoring.page>
 - c. Houston Street pedestrian detours: the signage here has been reviewed by DOT and DDC and said to be sufficient. From observation, people are aware of the detour however continue to ignore. CCL will add additional signage in Chinese and Spanish.
 - d. Williamsburg Bridge: flood protection is east of the bridge piers, along the water, so the piers will be included in the protected area. *(See slide 19 for photo and diagram.)*
 - e. Fire Boat House: DDC is working very closely with Parks and looking to have an update in December
11. PA1 - What We've Heard, cont.
- a. South Street / Montgomery Street Intersection: the ESCR team is working to schedule a site visit with NYC DOT.
 - b. Compost: Parks and DDC are working to schedule a follow up meeting with LESEC to discuss the design.
12. PA2 - Construction Progress - Stuyvesant Cove Park
- a. Area #1 – OPEN!
 - i. North entrance at E. 23rd St. closed for EDC Solar One construction work
 - ii. Greenway remains open
 - b. Area #2 – Ferry Access via E 20 St
 - i. Greenway and Park south of E. 20th St. scheduled to reopen late 2023/early 2024
 - c. Greenway connecting to East River Park is expected to open late 2023 once sinkholes are fixed
13. Air Quality Monitoring Update – October 2023 update *(See slides 24-27)*
- a. PA1
 - i. Most of the alerts were around the 15-minute mark. There were one or two of longer duration, and dust suppression techniques were applied.
 - b. PA
 - i. There were some long duration alerts, but they occurred when construction wasn't in progress.
14. PC - Construction progress *(See slide 29)*
- a. Location 1 – Jackson St. & Water St.

- i. Jackson St.: Water main installation and utility relocation
 - ii. Water St.: Water main installation and utility relocation
 - iii. South St.: Utility relocation
 - b. Location 2 – Lewis St. & Delancey St.
 - i. Water main installation and utility relocation
 - c. Location 3 – Baruch Dr. & Delancey St.
 - i. Water main installation and utility relocation
 - d. Location 4 – Houston & Avenue D
 - i. Test pits
 - ii. Water main installation and utility relocation
 - e. Location 5 – Avenue C and E. 18th
 - i. Test pits
 - f. Location 6 – Avenue C, E. 20th to E. 23rd
 - i. Test pits
 - ii. Clearing and grubbing

15. PC - Construction photos (See slide 30)

16. PC - Construction sequencing

- a. Locations with interceptor gate chamber buildings
 - i. Mobilization & Protection
 - ii. Test Pits and Site Survey
 - iii. Utility relocation and upgrades
 - iv. Excavation for Interceptor Gate Chambers
 - v. Install parallel conveyance sewer lines
 - vi. Construction of Interceptor Gate Buildings
 - vii. Final restoration
- b. Locations without tide gate chamber buildings
 - i. Mobilization & Protection
 - ii. Test Pits and Site Survey
 - iii. Utility relocation and upgrades
 - iv. Install parallel conveyance sewer lines
 - v. Final restoration

17. PC - Construction status – Corlears Hook Park

- a. Mobilization and protection – initial mobilization completed
 - i. Why: To secure the site.
 - ii. How: Construction fence installation, tree guard installation, etc.
- b. Test pits and site survey – initial test pits completed
 - i. Why: To determine site conditions, including subsurface.
 - ii. How: Building surveys, small excavations to locate subsurface utilities, etc.
- c. Utility relocation and upgrades – in progress
 - i. Why: To move underground utilities (water, gas, electric, steam) out of the way so that there is clear access to the sewer mains below.
 - ii. How: The contractor excavates the utilities in sections and relocates them—sometimes requiring road closures and parking interruptions.
 - iii. Result: New utilities, such as water mains, for residents and contractor has easier access to deep sewer infrastructure.
- d. Excavation for interceptor gate chambers - upcoming

- i. Why: Interceptor gate chambers are large subsurface infrastructure which connects the interceptor and provides access to the gate which is deep underground.
 - ii. How: Partially close CHP ballfield (approx. stays 70% open) and fully close CHP playground at the end of 2023 to stage for deep excavation.
 - iii. Result: Continued progress toward constructing the interceptor gate chamber with anticipated return of ballfield to Parks by Spring 2025.
 - e. Install parallel sewer lines
 - i. Why: Increase the sewer capacity of the protected area.
 - f. Final restoration - 2026
18. PC - Interceptor Gate and Chamber (*See slide 34 for diagram and slide 35 for rendering*)
- a. Interceptor Gate Chamber Scale
 - i. 37' x 26'
 - ii. Approximately 4 stories tall
19. PC - Excavation for Interceptor gate building (*Slide 36*)
- a. Late 2023/Early 2024
 - i. Partial closure of Corlears Hook Park ballfields amounting to approximately a 30% loss of space.
 - ii. 160' x 134' youth league field will remain. Parks coordinating alternative locations for adult leagues.
 - iii. New synthetic turf will be installed in the open portion of the athletic field this Winter 2023/24 s
 - iv. Full closure of Corlears Hook Park playground. Access to temporary bridge will remain.
 - b. Outcome
 - i. Interceptor gate chamber construction — a critical piece of the flood protection system which needs to connect to the interceptor sewer – can move forward.
 - c. Spring 2025
 - i. Contractor will return ballfield to NYC Parks when work concludes.
 - ii. Playground area restored
20. PC - Excavation for Interceptor gate building (*Slide 37*)
- a. Interceptor sewer - The interceptor sewer is 9' wide sewer that carries wastewater and stormwater to the Manhattan pump station which sends combined sewage to the Newton Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.
 - b. Interceptor gate chamber - Massive chamber that houses and provides access to the interceptor gate and sewer.
 - c. Interceptor gate chamber building (IGB) - Future building that will house controls for the interceptor gate chamber.
 - d. Construction space requirements - A crane and multiple excavators are necessary to excavate for and construct the interceptor gate chamber due to the depth of interceptor sewer and the chamber's size.

Q & A

Michael: Can you repeat the date that Corlears Hook Park will be reopening?

Desiree: Late spring of 2024

Michael: Regarding the additional closures, I have follow-up questions. We did have an advance warning of this – Desiree reached out to Friends of Corlears Hook Park. Thanks for the advance meeting, Desiree. Does this additional closure mean additional trees will be taken down?

Desiree: I will follow up on that.

Michael: And the additional closure is just for staging; correct? Nothing is going to be built on that land, and it will be returned for its original purpose, correct?

Desiree: Correct

Michael: And the temporary bridge is staying where it is, and access to it is staying where it is, correct?

Desiree: Correct

Michael: You said that the remaining ballfield turf would be replaced in the winter. So, does that that means it'll be replaced in two sections?

Desiree: Parks was scheduled to resurface the ballfield here, so they're going to move forward with that. I'm not sure if the details have been worked out for when the contractor restores the ballfield area in 2025. We'll take note of that and let you know when we find out.

Dianne: For Phase 2, PA1, you mentioned that the closure of fields 3, 4, & 5 will happen in December, which is tomorrow.

Desiree: It will be in mid-December, likely before Christmas.

Dianne: Have you been in touch with the Lions football team? They're been practicing under the lights.

Desiree: Parks would handle all of that coordination; we'll take that question back to them and then we can get you a response.

Dianne: It's great that the ballfields opening in spring 2024; (SLIDE 15) that's great, but that only services very few people as we've talked about before, as opposed to the number of people who use the esplanade. Do you have updates on when the pedestrian paths in Phase 1 will begin to open so that there's a replacement of the pedestrian space as well as the fields?

Desiree: I don't have a specific update on when particular paths will start to open. Right now, the contractor's looking at what will open with the field. I will get more info. in the beginning of the new year of what that access to ballfields 1 & 2 looks like and what will be opening.

Dianne: We were concerned to hear (at the walk-through) that access to the ballfields would probably be a blacktop path. We would like the pedestrian paths to open as quickly as possible so that some amenities are restored while other are taken away. The way this is now is only for ball players, not the majority of park users.

Dianne: Before you mentioned the closure of the passive lawn to support the Corlears Hook Bridge installment, you said something about taking a piece of the esplanade. Is that the esplanade down by the passive lawn?

Desiree: The esplanade that we were talking about is already under construction. The ongoing demolition and reconstruction of the esplanade ends just east of the passive lawn. The tiebacks for the new esplanade and wall go horizontally into the park—creating a support system for the wall, which is not freestanding. Therefore, the contractor needs to close a small portion of the passive lawn to do this construction at the southern end of the new esplanade. The passive lawn is going to close in 2024 to facilitate the assembly of the Corlears Hook and Delancey Street bridges.

Dianne: Does the closure of fields 3, 4, & 5 include the closure of esplanade next to them and if so, why?

Desiree: Yes, it does. That way the contractor can get moving on that part of the esplanade which is a time-intensive operation. Also, it would be a complete dead end to have that part of the esplanade open, which would not be safe.

Dianne: So, to confirm, they are not just closing that area to close it, they're actually going to work there?

Desiree: Yes. The esplanade and the deep sewer work are foundational work that must be completed before the new park can be constructed.

Wendy: When the passive lawn is closed in February, there will be no access to the water above the ferry dock, correct?

Desiree: When the passive lawn is closed, I believe the esplanade there will be open, but I can confirm that.

Wendy: In PA2, the air quality overages that were long were at Murphy Brothers playground. Since children are playing there, what's the plan for these non-construction overages?

Desiree: Murphy Brothers Playground is an active construction site; it's completely closed, and no kids are playing there. The only place this monitor could be located is sandwiched between the ConEd facility parking area and the FDR. A significant amount of non-construction activities in the area there plays a part in the readings. If you want more info on PA2, we can talk about that at another meeting.

Wendy: I bring this up because it's akin to what's going to happen in Corlears where you'll have heavy duty construction right next to a ballfield that's going to remain open. Are you going to add monitors there?

Desiree: Yes. As we've always stated, the monitors move when the construction moves.

Wendy: What about using social media to let people know that the Houston St. south side is dangerous? You could do it in all languages and get people's attention better than the signs do.

Desiree: We can speak to DDC about that; they manage the social media for this project.

Christine: I really appreciate the updates about compost yard and the Fire Boat House today, but December is a tight month, and I would really encourage DDC to start scheduling something. Just want to make a few comments about the future closures of the ballfields. I appreciate you showing the math here (*slide 16*), but it feels like we're losing amenities like the esplanade. We're losing space along the water for walking, but we don't know when any of that will be replaced. It's not really a park experience if you're going through an active construction site, and the only amenity is a ballfield. It seems a little underwhelming in terms of what the community is really being given in exchange for closing a significant part. I don't think I'm the only one who wants to encourage you to work through some scenarios about what we can really expect to open next so we can have a dialogue about what's important to the community. Access to the water and walking along it are the top priorities.

Desiree: Thank you. We appreciate the sentiment and have been taking it into consideration. PA2 should be fully open hopefully by the end of this year which will create a significant amount of more walking space along the waterfront. We're grateful for the push that that will open. We will take back all of the comments, but this transition really needs to happen so we move forward with the schedule of completion and the restoration of the park.

Dov: Regarding PC², it's happening in our front yards. We see the points (see slide 29), but can we get more detail? What's the scope, what's the limit, and how far long are we on each these? That would be very useful for us; thank you.

Desiree: We can look to provide a bit more. Early on in the project we had a chart, and that might work here. It had the different steps and was colored in to show where we are with the status of each location. We can look into creating something like that here.

Susan (via Zoom chat): I was wondering whether the six trees that will be removed for the parallel conveyance on E. 20th St. and Avenue C will be replaced, or is their removal permanent due to the new structure (the interceptor gate building)?

Desiree: Those will not be replaced because the buildings will be placed there, but we can check if there will be one or two on each side of the building, perhaps.

Desiree: If there aren't any more questions tonight, we can respond to any future questions that are pulled together and sent to us. You can also use the inquiry tool.

CAG-only portion

Michael: Ironically, what's funny is that we tried to get the playground to be part of ESCR, and they said there wasn't enough money, but now that they need it for their equipment, voila. Desiree couldn't answer a lot of the questions because there will be a lot of players involved with bringing it back to the community because we already raised more than \$1 million in capital funding from the City Council and the Borough President's office. So now the question is where will the money go if ESCR pays for it? (Even though what we raised wasn't nearly enough.) Parks also wants to make sure that the playground is restored in a way that they want it to be restored, so it might become some weird battleground for the Friends Corlears Hook Park.

Dianne: I wasn't able to go to the last CB3 Parks meeting in November. I looked through the presentation, but I want to confirm that their news about closing 3, 4, and 5 is the first time we're hearing this. Was it mentioned at any prior CAG or Parks meetings?

Michael: I was not at that meeting either, but I believe it's the first time we're hearing about it and about the Corlears closures as well. We were asked to embargo everything we discussed last week until it was announced publicly.

Michael: I think Dov dropped off, but to his questions about PC, I think what he's mainly concerned about is how much if any of that work is occurring outside of park land. He and I live in the same building. Since it's connecting to already existing infrastructure it seems like part of this work will also need to dig up some of the roads and sidewalks.

Christine: Aren't they doing a bunch of work along Water St. now for PC? I think it's more than parkland.

Michael: I haven't walked along Water St. in a while, but I know that the east part of Jackson St. has been closed for quite a while now due to PC. I thought it was related to the staging and storing of the equipment for what they were doing.

Christine: I'm having a hard time visualizing how this heavy equipment gets out of Corlears Hook Park because it's going to be massive. Also, the cement pumping thing massive. Once they build that it feels like it's going to be really challenging to get it out. I don't think they'll close the FDR.

² [Parallel conveyance](#)

Michael: I'm not sure if they'll crane it in and out or if they'll have to drive it across the whole ballfield.

Paula: I want to take advantage of this lull in the conversation to welcome Shaheeda Smith to the CAG; she's replacing Damaris who had to step off the CAG due to other work commitments.

Christine: I'm wondering how we can push a little harder on this bubble that is the ballfield.

Michael: I was sorry that none of the Little League representatives were on today's call; they might have advocated more strongly than we can.

Dianne: When we asked at the walkthrough about the areas surrounding ballfields 1 & 2 they said, "Oh, we didn't really think about that. We've been hearing how important it is to just open the ballfields." The path that surrounds the ballfield seems to be an afterthought. I'm disappointed that there don't seem to be answers about when those amenities in Phase 1 are going to be useable. We might want to add this to our CAG list of our issues that need to be resolved, possibly with the help of elected officials. I forgot to ask about the fencing in the very northern part near Con Ed, but it's also space that we can't technically get to. ...It's going to be a very tight squeeze; I'm not even sure it's going to be 42% with that ConEd closure included and considered. But the bigger question is how do we start to get some movement on these answers about when these other amenities in Phase 1 are going to start to open? It would be helpful to have Desiree narrate a slide from the CB3 Parks meeting that I couldn't attend.

Michael: I feel like a broken record whenever I bring this up, but where is everybody? I feel like there are some people who drop in, cause havoc, and then don't attend for another five meetings. I'm tired of that mentality from those people. It's the same handful of dedicated people, and I don't know how to address that.

Dianne: I know that many people have conflicts, but if they are making an effort to follow the notes and stay in touch with Paula and Tara, make sure they're informed about what's happening that's great. What concerns me is that we generally don't have a quorum to make decisions or take actions. Now we're faced with a situation where predictably, the overall plan is changing somewhat, but we're not getting info. about Phase 1 and how that's going to happen, and we can't advocate for community if we don't have quorum.

Michael: Tara and Paula, are the people who aren't attending being active in some shape or form?

Paula: Not really.

Michael: Can we go the groups where people don't attend and ask for another representative?

Tara: We can take an inventory to see who we could reach out to about alternates. Many people are overtaxed, including the NYCHA TAs.

Michael: Maybe it's worth checking for alternates and replacements.

Michael: An overarching concern is about equity. Four years from now, I don't want people pointing fingers and saying that you nine people did this to us. All of the onus is on us.

Wendy: It'd be interesting to make a list of what we've been able to influence or change. I'm wondering about Christine's situation. How can we help you with the compost yard?

Christine: We're just getting promises and not any meetings. I'll be the broken record on that one. The CAG already sent a strong letter, and we appreciate that the CAG was able to do that. Being a squeaky wheel is pretty much all we can do; it's just promises and no action

Dianne: I have a question for you and a similar one for Camille. One of the commitments was to fund compost yard alternative for LESEC, and then that was cut in the budget. Another commitment was to follow a system and set expectations for the Baruch bath house, and it's unclear whether they're doing what they said they would do. Are these issues that either one of you would like the CAG to get involved in?

Camille, via the chat: Can we table the Baruch bath house conversation until the next meeting? (She's currently at another meeting at the Lower East Side Girls Club.)

Christine: These budget cuts are really devastating. If the \$2 million is restored for the temporary compost yard but everything else is pulled away from us, I don't know what we'll do with that space. We also need ongoing support for programming to use the space. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that it will get restored

Dianne: If they go back on their ESCR commitments, that's an issue. If they're blatantly doing so, that's a concern though I understand that some groups may want to pursue it.

Wendy: I want to ask about stewardship. Before the new ESCR plan, there was a study about stewardship by GOLES and Rebuild by Design. Is it correct that stewardship is not a considered a real park activity? Christine, do you feel that is feel a recognized park activity? I wonder if that's something this group could be looking at.

Christine: Parks is always talking about partnerships with organizations, but I think it got complicated for East River Park.

Michael: I think our current Parks commissioner appreciates Friends groups a lot more than our prior commissioner; there's a better relationship now.

Dianne: There's nothing to steward until we can pressure them to get these new sections of the park open. While it's important to think ahead to that, bringing the CAG together is to keep the focus on meeting the needs of the community. We constantly have to say that 's not how we use the park. I want to make sure the CAG stays focused on this as well. We have made some changes. The fact that the CAG spoke up in a unified way when they wanted to close the whole esplanade was a good thing; I'm really happy that happened. I really hated the idea of shutting down the whole esplanade. I'm glad that we were able to find common ground on the CAG. I'd like to see us do more of that.

Kate Loeb, via the chat: I can attest the CAG's voice is very important

Christine: Our next push should really be how we are going to articulate this green bubble in the construction site. Good luck getting to the island of green. I need to process that a little bit.

Dianne: The CB3 parks has been moved to the 13th; I'm assuming we'll get some form of an ESCR update then. Maybe we could quickly turn around questions if there's not enough meaningful information in there. We'll see if they've closed the three ballfields by then.

Christine: So much for input and advance notice.

Wendy: I have one last thing, maybe it's ridiculous; it's a mitigation thing. The pool at Hamilton Fish is half the size in the summer, and there's no morning and evening swim for adults only. Given the situation with East River Park and Tompkins Square Park being half closed all next year, is that something this group could advocate for, that the pool to be full open? It's sad to see it only partly open.

Dianne: I think it's a lifeguard staffing issue.

Tara: Given all of today's important updates, we'll circulate the presentation to shoes who couldn't attend so we can get back to DDC w/ significant questions that weren't raised today in time for our next meeting.

Wendy: Can Baruch bath house be on the agenda?

Tara: Absolutely.

Christine: What's the status on commitments?

Wendy: I'm not sure if we've heard that there's a release date for the FDR greening study. When we see the report, maybe there's something we could advocate for like the crosswalk at Houston. There's no crosswalk there.