



Proposal for CB3/ConEdison Settlement Fund 2013 Cycle

The Lower East Side Ecology Center is applying for a grant in the amount of \$108,718 to continue its EcoBizNYC and Street Tree Stewardship programs to improve air quality and overall health in our community.

EcoBizNYC, a program of the Lower East Side Ecology Center (Ecology Center), began in late 2008 with the goal of working with small businesses to help reduce their negative impacts on air pollution and the local environment. The program has targeted energy usage and waste production at 245 businesses in Community Board 3 to help improve sustainability, reduce energy load, and reduce operating costs. In the coming year, the EcoBizNYC program will work with previously enrolled businesses to further reduce their environmental impacts, work to enroll new businesses throughout CB3 with special focus on the Settlement Area, and will continue a focus on connecting businesses with street tree care.

Now in its third year, the Ecology Center's Street Tree Stewardship program works with City agencies, such as the NYC Parks Department and the NYC Tree Trust, to advocate and care for newly planted trees in Community Board 3 (particularly close to the Con Edison plant on 14th Street). So far, over 170 new street trees have been added to the Settlement Zone and the Ecology Center staff has engaged community volunteers and interns to care for the new and established trees. Through the Street Tree Stewardship program, the Ecology Center will continue to care for street trees, especially new trees that require help in the first two years, as they establish themselves. The program aims to educate and involve the community, creating a robust stewardship community that will take care of street trees and advocate for more street trees in CB3.

Organizational Description and Background

Outstanding Renewal Enterprises (doing business as Lower East Side Ecology Center) was founded in 1987 and works towards a more sustainable New York City by providing community-based recycling and composting programs, developing local stewardship of green space, and increasing community awareness, involvement and youth development through environmental education programs.

The Ecology Center offers community-based environmental programming that focuses on offering opportunities for New Yorkers to become directly involved in the sustainability in their City. The Ecology Center's programs include public compost collection and education, electronic waste recycling in all five boroughs, open space stewardship in the Lower East Side, and environmental education programs for youth and adults.

The impetus for starting the EcoBizNYC program was that small businesses and small business owners often lack the time and resources to focus on sustainability measures such as saving energy and reducing waste. EcoBizNYC has been able to work with 245 local businesses to look at their operations and introduce them to incentive programs that ultimately are able to save them money while reducing environmental impacts. The number of small businesses is what makes the Lower East Side such a diverse and rich neighborhood and finding ways to help businesses stay in business in the neighborhood is part of what makes EcoBizNYC such a powerful program.

Through its Street Tree Stewardship program, the Ecology Center has been able to bring a stewardship program to the shared public space of the streets of our neighborhood and use street trees to connect the community and small businesses to improve the neighborhood.

EcoBizNYC Program Successes

The EcoBizNYC program has seen tremendous success in its five years, enrolling nearly 250 businesses to date. Of those businesses, 38 have received grants of up to \$1,000 to implement sustainable changes such as upgrading to energy-efficient equipment and weatherproofing to reduce energy use. Many of the businesses enrolled in the program have changed a majority of their lighting to energy-efficient CFL or LED bulbs, either on their own or with the assistance of ConEd's Small Business Direct Install (SBDI) program, which provides financial assistance and project coordination for the businesses.

In the past year, the EcoBizNYC program has refined its services and provided additional support to enrolled businesses to further reduce their impacts. College and graduate-level interns remain as the backbone of the program's operations, working to enroll businesses, assess their needs, and provide assistance through the process of implementing sustainability measures.

A focus on street tree care this year helped engage businesses with trees near their storefronts. Through individual efforts and participation in street tree care days, we have seen an increased interest in monitoring and caring for trees. The greatest interest expressed by businesses has been for tree guards. While this was fulfilled in much of the Settlement Area by the NYC Tree Trust, interest in other parts of the neighborhood are great as well.

The program's outreach efforts have been re-focused on the Settlement Area, with twice the internship hours devoted to this area than the rest of the CB3 district. While we have reached out to most businesses in this northeast corner of the Community Board, the number of new enrollments was low. We suspect this is the result of full saturation of the program among interested businesses. While business turnover continues to bring in new prospects, the existing businesses seem reluctant to participate.

An additional effort was made to enroll businesses with Chinese-speaking staff. With the assistance of two Chinese-speaking interns, and in cooperation with the Chinatown BID

and AAFE, we are working to create a translation of our business handout that both accurately portrays the program and is culturally sensitive to the interests of Chinese business owners. These translations will be utilized when we next have a Chinese-speaking intern.

Communication with businesses has been established through a variety of channels. Besides in-person communication, which is always most effective but also the most time consuming, social media outreach through Facebook has been well received and continues to grow in the number of contacts.

EcoBizNYC continues to be a presence in the community, partnering with organizations on events and greening efforts with Forth Arts Block, the East Village Community Coalition, the Manhattan Borough President's Office Go Green Lower East Side program, and the Lower East Side BID (LES BID).

We continue to promote a number of free incentive programs to EcoBizNYC businesses, such as ConEdison's Small Business Direct Install Program, Transportation Alternatives' Bike Friendly Business District, and MillionTreesNYC's Adopt-A-Tree and Request-A-Tree programs.

ConEdison's Small Business Direct Install Program is the newest version of the ConEdison's Demand Side Management Program. SBDI provides businesses with a free energy use assessment and subsidized lighting upgrades. Increased direct coordination with the administrators of the program as well as the field representative have allowed us to reach out to a backlog of businesses that were interested during the SBDI program's transitional time last year. We are continually working with this program to serve our businesses and reduce energy use.

Transportation Alternatives' Bike Friendly Business District has been popular with EcoBizNYC businesses since we began promoting it in 2012. Over 30 EcoBizNYC businesses are enrolled in the network, which works with business to provide bike safety literature, discounts for bicyclists, and requests bike infrastructure, such as bike racks, from the City.

As a result of our outreach related to street trees, the EcoBizNYC business owners were very interested in MillionTreesNYC's Adopt-A-Tree and Request-A-Tree programs over the past year. Through our partnership with the NYC Parks Department and the NYC Tree Trust on the Street Tree Stewardship Program, we hope to be able to identify trees near EcoBizNYC businesses where the sidewalk space allows for tree guards and help businesses use their grant funding to get guards installed.

EcoBizNYC Program in the Future

The EcoBizNYC program hopes to continue to focus efforts on the Settlement Area, while also engaging businesses throughout CB3 in 2014. Our intern hours will remain

concentrated in the Settlement Area, and the Program Manager, Rebecca Krauss, will directly work in this area to bring in new businesses where possible.

In the coming year, we will seek to build deeper relationships with enrolled businesses, especially in the Settlement Area, to implement projects that further reduce energy and enhance sustainability. Through the grant and check-in processes this fall, we have cataloged the interests of existing businesses in further assistance and projects. Interns will follow up directly with these businesses to fulfill their interests. While some of these projects will be within our existing array of resources, including connecting more businesses with the ConEd SBDI program, other projects will take new collaborations and implementation strategies, such as adding tree guards and introducing composting systems. To do this, we will work with existing resources in the City to fulfill those requests, such as waste haulers that accept compost.

In addition to deepening our involvement with enrolled businesses, we will continue to seek out new businesses to work with. We will do this as we have in the past, with interns introducing the program to businesses throughout CB3. Special attention will be given to the Settlement Area by having the Program Manager working in this area. In order to reach Chinese-language businesses, the EcoBizNYC program will partner with AAFE and the Chinatown BID to identify interested intern candidates with Chinese language capacity. This will allow us to reach a wider audience and especially an audience that is often underserved for sustainability assistance.

Street tree care will continue to be another important focus of EcoBizNYC. We will continue to assist business owners in caring for street trees with demonstrations of best practices, providing materials, and sharing instruction on tree needs. We will work with businesses to install tree guards, and will consider the best options for this to happen, including utilizing grant funds as well as working with the NYC Tree Trust where possible.

Street Tree Stewardship Successes

The Lower East Side Ecology Center's Street Tree Stewardship Project worked with the NYC Parks Department and the NYC Tree Trust to plant over 170 new street trees near the Con Edison Plant. Street trees are a valuable asset to any community and in this area the trees are helping to: capture air pollution and greenhouse gases from the electricity plant, reduce air pollution by lessening demand for energy to heat and cool buildings, absorb storm water, and creating shade and wildlife habitat. The trees also are a way to beautify the neighborhood and provide quality-of-life benefits.

Taking care of street trees is the best way to ensure that the potential benefits of putting trees on the street is maximized. To that end, the Ecology Center offered 31 Street Tree Internships for NYC high school students, providing 1000 hours of stewardship work over the past three summers. We were able to double the number of local interns this year (10 of them were residents and/or students in the settlement area) by partnering with the LES Girls Club to host the internship trainings, and recruiting from the NYCHA

recreation centers and neighborhood high schools. These internships were supported by other community groups and city agencies including: NYCHA Riis and Campos Plaza Community Centers, NYCHA Gardening and Greening, LES Girls Club, TreeKit, Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, NYC Parks Forestry, LES Waterfront Alliance, Transportation Alternatives, GOLES, MillionTreesNYC and TreesNY.

The Street Tree Interns are charged with weeding, picking up trash, cultivating, watering, mulching, and planting flowers in the tree pits, and the important task of identifying dead or dying trees and reporting them to NYC Parks Forestry for replacement by the planting contractors. Given the high mortality rate seen in street trees in the first three years of life as well as the slow-to-emerge effects of Superstorm Sandy on some trees in the neighborhood, it is important that all of the Street Tree Program partners work together to maximize the City's resources for community benefit.

The Street Tree Interns participated in an additional program this year to compliment the greening efforts of the Ecology Center. They helped maintain and water 20 trees that were a temporary addition to Pier 42, a new park at the southern end of East River Park. This fall, these new trees will be planted by the New York Restoration Project to replace trees on local NYCHA property that were damaged by Superstorm Sandy.

The EcoBizNYC interns worked hand in hand with the Street Tree Interns by encouraging EcoBizNYC businesses to adopt the street trees in front of their storefronts. They also helped lead street tree care workdays and stewardship classes with community groups. So far, 35 EcoBizNYC businesses have adopted trees.

To compliment the work of the interns and the EcoBizNYC businesses, we led 12 community street tree stewardship workdays in the past year. The following community groups participated in street tree stewardship activities: 9th Street A-1 Block Association, Boys Club of NYC, George Jackson Academy, Whole Foods Union Square, Comprehensive Day and Night School, FDNY Explorers, Green City Challenge, Transportation Alternatives, GOLES Afterschool Environmental Program, Henry Street Settlement Afterschool, The Earth School, Bard High School Early College, The NYC Compost Project, GreenThumb, TreesNY, the LES BID, and the ISS Afterschool Program at PS 126. These street tree workdays were bolstered by our partnerships with the NYC Compost Project to provide mulch and compost for the volunteers to add to the trees and the NYC Tree Trust to provide tree guards, new trees, and expanded tree beds where volunteers planted bulbs and ground cover. For the street tree workdays this fall, we were able to bring in over 160 volunteers to beautify and protect the street tree beds.

Additionally this fall, we are partnering with the New York Restoration Project and La Plaza Cultural community to host a tree giveaway. The giveaway will provide 100 small trees to members of the community for increasing the number of trees in private backyards, co-op yards, and community gardens.

Street Tree Stewardship Going Forward

The Ecology Center would like to continue our Street Tree Stewardship Program, providing care for new and established trees in the Settlement Zone. We will work with the Parks Department and the NYC Tree Trust to plant more trees in an expanded radius around the Con Edison plant, enhance existing tree infrastructure, replace dead and storm damaged trees in the Settlement Zone, continue community stewardship, and increase the efforts of EcoBizNYC to facilitate business owners to take care of the trees in front of their businesses.

After a successful year of collaboration with Parks and NYC Tree Trust foresters, we are optimistic that we will be able to plant even more trees in the Settlement Zone and enhance existing tree infrastructure with expanded beds, tree guards, bulb plantings, and ground cover in 2014. Parks and NYC Tree Trust will be responsible for new tree planting, expanded tree bed construction, and procurement of tree guards, bulbs and ground cover, while we will continue to coordinate community participation to plant the bulbs and ground cover, and provide extended tree stewardship. We also plan to help the Tree Trust with their outreach to NYCHA and Community Gardens to help them receive new and replacement trees and make sure these trees are cared for.

Working with community and youth groups in the neighborhood has also proven to be a successful and mutually beneficial partnership for caring for street trees. The goal of these partnerships is to increase tree survival and the environmental benefits of street trees. The Street Tree Internship program will continue to be successful with high school students who are able to provide water and stewardship for the trees during the summer when it is most important. For the past two summers, we were permitted by the NYC DEP to use fire hydrants to facilitate watering trees and we anticipate being able to renew the permit for 2014.

We would like this program to not only provide the benefits of street trees to the neighborhood, but also to give local youth opportunities to improve their community and learn green job skills. This year, we plan to further increase participation in our summer street tree internship for local youth by providing more targeted recruiting in the settlement zone. In order to accomplish this increase in local interns, we will start recruiting earlier and we will recruit more heavily from the neighborhood high schools, after school programs, and community groups that we will already be working with to coordinate stewardship days.

We will focus our stewardship efforts on working with community groups and residents during the spring and fall when high school students have less time to care for trees. The NYC Compost Project in Manhattan, a program run by the Department of Sanitation, will continue to provide free compost and mulch for these stewardship activities. The Ecology Center has the contract to run this program in the borough of Manhattan, and one of the compost coordinators from this program will assist in all stewardship activities. Our goal will be to expand on the number of community groups that we are able to bring together for street tree stewardship in the spring and fall of 2014.

The Street Tree Stewardship Program will continue to work with EcoBizNYC businesses, because they are both likely to benefit from having street trees near their storefronts and also have the best access to water. The EcoBizNYC businesses were extremely helpful during our workdays this year, especially when we were able to provide them with compost, mulch, tree guards and plant material for their adopted tree beds.

Timeline

January – April 2014

EcoBizNYC:

- Recruit and train four spring interns to engage new businesses and check-in with currently participating businesses
- Work with businesses to develop proposals for spring round of sustainability grants
- Compile data from check-ins about business needs (i.e. compost collection, marketing, energy assessments, etc.)

Street Tree Stewardship Program

- Plan spring stewardship days with community groups

May – August 2014

EcoBizNYC:

- Recruit and train eight spring/summer interns to engage new businesses and address the needs identified by currently participating businesses
- Award Sustainability Grants (late April/early May)
- Work with interested businesses to beautify street tree pits through planting flowers, offering tools for reduced prices, and bulk purchasing of tree guards
- Work with businesses to develop proposals for fall round of sustainability grants

Street Tree Stewardship Program

- Hold 4 stewardship days with community groups to pull weeds, clean up, add compost, and mulch tree beds
- Recruit and train 15 Street Tree Stewardship interns from local schools, after school programs, and community groups
- Plan fall stewardship days with community groups

September – December 2014

EcoBizNYC:

- Recruit and train four fall interns to engage new businesses and check-in with currently participating businesses
- Hold street tree care days with the goal of having EcoBizNYC businesses participate
- Award Sustainability Grants (late September/early October)

Street Tree Stewardship Program

- Hold 4 fall stewardship days with community groups and NY Tree Trust to plant bulbs and groundcover in the newly expanded and guarded tree beds

January - March 2015

- Prepare report for Community Board 3 on project activities

Street Tree Stewardship Program

- Plan spring stewardship days with community groups

April – May 2015

Street Tree Stewardship Program

- Hold 4 spring stewardship days with community groups and NY Tree Trust to plant bulbs and groundcover in the newly expanded and guarded tree beds

Staff

Rebecca Krauss has been the EcoBizNYC program manager for three years and began with the program as an EcoBizNYC intern. She has a Masters of Urban Planning and a background in sustainability. She will continue to help the EcoBizNYC program grow and evolve.

Daniel Tainow has been the Education Director for the Lower East Side Ecology Center for the past three years. Dan has a strong background in environmental education and natural resource conservation, having led educational workshops and greening workdays for all ages. He is also NYC Department of Parks and Recreation Citizen Pruner. Dan, a resident of the Lower East Side, will continue to develop and implement the Street Tree Stewardship Program.

In addition, Christine Datz-Romero, the Executive Director, and Caroline Kruse, the Development Director, of the Ecology Center are staying involved in the management of the program.

Community Board 3 Con Edison Settlement Funding Request 2014		
Lower East Side Ecology Center		
Personnel		
EcoBiz Project Manager	25 hrs @ \$25/hr 52 weeks	32,500
Stewardship Program Coordinator	25% of Dan Tainow time for 16 months	16,625
Web & Printed Materials Development		7,500
Subtotal		56,625
Fringe Benefits @ 30%		16,988
Total Personnel		73,613
OTPS		
Printing & Marketing	Rack cards, stickers, signage	1,500
Sustainability Grants	15 grants of up to \$1,000 (\$600 average)	9,000
Stipends for EcoBiz Interns	15 college interns @\$475	7,125
Stipends for Stewardship Interns	15 high school interns @ \$200	3,000
Supplies	Water conservation kits, light bulb samples	300
Total OTPS		20,925
Personnel & OTPS		94,538
Administrative Overhead @ 15%		14,181
In-Kind		
Compost Coordinator	20% of Natalie Wesson time	11,734
Materials for Street Tree Stewardship	compost, mulch, tools, transportation	5,000
Total In-Kind		16,734
Total Project Cost		\$125,452
Request from CB 3		\$108,718