

2019 Annual Report

Waterfront Management Advisory Board



Background

This report provides an overview of the Waterfront Management Advisory Board's (WMAB) meetings in 2019. The WMAB advises the City on matters related to the waterfront and waterways and guides the Department of City Planning (DCP) on the development of the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan. This plan, published every 10 years, provides a vision for the city's waterfront for the next decade and beyond. DCP launched public engagement for the current plan in early 2019. The plan is scheduled to be released by December 31, 2020.

The WMAB is convened according to the NYC Charter Chapter 56 § 1303. According to the Charter, the WMAB shall hold at least one meeting every quarter and consult with and, upon request of the mayor or any city agency, advise the mayor or such agency on any matter relating to the industrial, commercial, residential, recreational or other use or development of wharves, waterfront property and waterfront infrastructure in the city. The Charter also establishes the parameters for appointing members to the WMAB. The WMAB shall consist nine members to be appointed by the mayor and nine members to be appointed by the speaker of the city council, provided that the mayor and the speaker each appoint at least one member from each borough. Appointed members include representatives of various organizations, industries and advocates interested in the industrial, commercial, residential, recreational or other use or development of the waterfront. The WMAB is also comprised of representatives of DCP, the Mayor's Office of Resiliency (MOR), the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

WMAB Meetings in 2019

Meeting 1 - March 5, 2019

DCP announced that there is Commissioner-level buy in to provide DCP with the agency support needed to create the next Comprehensive Waterfront Plan.

In January 2019, EDC released the NYC Ferry Feasibility Study 2018/2019 in conjunction with the mayor's announcement of the expansion of the NYC Ferry. The planned expansion includes updating existing routes and establishing new routes.

- Modification of the Astoria Route to include Brooklyn Navy Yard (May 2019)
- Launch of the St. George Route (2020)
- Launch of the Coney Island Route (2021)
- Extension of the Soundview Route: Throgs Neck/Ferry Point Park (2021)
- Modification of the South Brooklyn Route (2021)

Following these announcements, DCP briefed the WMAB on the early stages of its Waterfront Public Access Implementation (WPAI) study. The stated goal of this DCP-led study is to identify opportunities for increasing waterfront public access throughout New York City.

- The study will examine publicly accessible open space along the city's waterfronts and waterways, and propose strategies for improving and expanding access, particularly in areas underserved by open space.

- Since 1993, NYC has been a national leader in utilizing zoning regulations to mandate the creation of new waterfront public spaces—known as Waterfront Public Access Areas (WPAAs)—as a condition of development on applicable waterfront lots.
 - (Find the WPAAs near you on the [Waterfront Access Map](#))
- DCP explained that current waterfront zoning requirements do not apply to industrial uses.
 - This was initially due to the incompatibility of public access and industrial activities, particularly water-dependent uses.
- However, DCP pointed to emerging trends in the use of the waterfront for industrial purposes and pointed to examples of where industrial uses have provided public access. The [Newtown Creek Nature Walk](#) is an excellent example of how waterfront public access can be compatible with, and enhance, New Yorkers’ awareness of surrounding industrial areas.
- The WMAB discussed frameworks for assessing the compatibility between uses and public access to ensure that maritime uses—industrial or otherwise—will not be inhibited from functioning effectively and expanding, while also recognizing opportunities for expanding waterfront access where appropriate.
 - The goal is to create new waterfront public areas and maximize public access in areas where there is a lack of access to the waterfront.
 - There are also opportunities to think more creatively about design and flexibility for public spaces that can activate waterfronts without encumbering surrounding uses.
- There was also discussion about the importance of providing visual access to the waterfront, especially to residential areas that abut industrial areas on the waterfront.
 - Several WMAB members suggested that providing visual access could help improve community/industry relations.
- The WPAI study is supported through the NYS Department of State Environmental Protection Fund.

Meeting 2 - May 30, 2019

The focus of the second WMAB meeting was resiliency. MOR, DPR, and DCP presented high-level overviews of the City’s resiliency strategies and major initiatives. The subsequent discussion touched on how the City uses the NYC Panel on Climate Change’s (NPCC) projections for the purposes of land use, open space, and infrastructure planning, and how the City’s is approaching the different types of climate-related risk that it faces.

Coastal Flood Risk and Land Use Planning – DCP

- The City uses a strategy of multiple layers of defense to support coastal flood resiliency. This entails pursuing coastal defense strategies to protect from storm surge and sea level rise, as well as retrofitting and upgrading infrastructure systems to withstand climate hazards. This strategy also includes preparing residents and business for future events, and promoting the flood-resilient design of buildings so they can better withstand flooding and therefore be reoccupied faster after a disaster.
- There are over 400,000 New Yorkers currently living in the FEMA-designated 1% annual chance floodplain, a population roughly the size of the Minneapolis, Minnesota. Given the population and geographic scale of the 1% annual chance floodplain in NYC, retreating from the floodplain in its entirety is not feasible or practical.
- The areas of the City that could be inundated regularly by tidal flooding is comparatively small. Some neighborhoods are already experiencing “sunny day flooding” due to high tides, and sections of the city’s coastline could be subject to twice daily tidal flooding by the 2050s. The

City's approach for land use planning in such areas is to support investment in resilient buildings while also limiting future density so as to not increase the population of these vulnerable areas. New Yorkers can use the DCP's 'Flood Hazard Mapper' to better understand their current and future coastal and tidal flood risk. This mapper is intended to enable more informed decision making by all New Yorkers.

- DCP also discussed the City's approach to building scale resiliency. This includes updates to the Building Code and Zoning Resolution to incorporate resilience into the design of buildings. DCP recently released preliminary recommendations for 'Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency' (ZCFR) to promote resilient buildings and reduce damage and disruption to current and future coastal floods. Public review of this city-wide zoning text amendment is expected in 2020.

Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines – MOR

- MOR's presentation focused on the importance of ensuring that City capital and infrastructure projects consider resiliency.
- MOR released an updated 'Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines'(CRDG) in March 2019. These guidelines are a collaboratively developed standard for using forward-looking climate data in the design and implementation of City buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces. The guidelines help ensure that City capital projects can withstand extreme weather and a changing climate to serve New Yorkers, minimize additional O&M costs, and maintain an uninterrupted useful service life.

Design and Planning for Flood Resiliency – DPR

- DPR manages about 160 miles of NYC's 520 miles of shoreline – 74 percent of City-owned waterfront, and 30 percent of the shoreline overall.
- DPR has developed guidelines and best practices, such as Design and Planning for Flood Resiliency (2017) to protect facilities and infrastructure from all types of flood events. According to DPR, this speaks to a broader pattern of looking holistically at-risk management, rather than focusing only on sea level rise and storm surge. DPR's work is also informed by a manual for the design and construction of sustainable parks and open space, captured in the High-Performance Landscape Guidelines (2010)
- DPR's presentation also provided updates on two major projects in their portfolio: NYC DPR Rockaway Beach Boardwalk Reconstruction and East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR)

Meeting 3 - September 18, 2019

The focus of the third WMAB meeting in 2019 was **Coastal Wetlands and Ecology**. The WMAB heard presentations from wetland scientist and WMAB member, Dr. Judith Weis, and Chief of Natural Resources at DPR, Marit Larson. Both speakers discussed the state of wetlands in NYC, and what can be done to protect and restore them in the face of increasing climate risks and development pressure. The WMAB then discussed ways to further support the preservation and expansion of waterfront habitats.

The Sustainability of Salt Marshes - Dr. Judith Weis

- Salt marshes provide many essential functions, including acting as breeding grounds for fish, a stopping place for migratory birds, water filtration, and flood control and storm surge reduction.
- Salt marshes are also incredibly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. There are limited options for salt marshes when faced with sea level rise; they can move inland, increase in elevation, or be submerged by the rising waters. While some marshes may be able to migrate inland, many do not have the space to due to the presence of roads, parking lots, and buildings.

However, through planning, we can find ways for marshes to migrate inland. The tools that would allow for such migration include conservation easements and buyouts/land acquisition.

- Salt marshes may also not get enough sediment to keep up their elevation with the pace of sea level rise. To mitigate this issue, it is possible to add sediment onto the marsh surface to help it elevate. This approach will be required every few years to maintain the marsh, which can be resource and cost intensive.
- Invasive phragmites can provide some benefits, including promoting faster marsh elevation due to their root structure. In the context of climate change and sea level rise, this raises the interesting question of whether to keep Phragmites in place for resiliency purposes or remove them for ecological purposes.
- The economics of marsh restoration, and the limits of conventional cost benefit analyses in capturing the nuanced benefits of these ecosystems, was also discussed. Members suggested that there needs to be a better understanding of the benefits associated with storm surge reduction, increased biodiversity, and improved public health. The value of an existing wetland compared to a newly constructed wetland also needs to be better understood and communicated. Members also noted that having a better sense of the quantitative value of wetlands could help improve the existing regulatory framework for water quality credits.
- Living shorelines with oysters or mussels at the water edge help to reduce erosion and can provide protection from coastal storms. Living shorelines with oysters or mussels do not typically protect against sea level rise, though living shoreline pilot projects are exploring of ways to incorporate sediment accretion into their design.

Draft Wetlands Management Framework - DPR

- The draft Wetland Management Framework (WMF) lays out a comprehensive roadmap for the preservation, restoration and management of all wetlands and streams in New York City with a focus on those under the jurisdiction of DPR.
- The draft WMF is informed by three decades of restoration experience and new information about the condition of our wetlands. A matrix of 'condition' and 'vulnerability' of these resources helps to determine priority sites for protection and restoration.
- DPR owns 50% of NYC's wetlands (720 acres of freshwater wetlands, 66 miles of streams, 1,483 acres of salt marsh), and is developing a framework for how to improve wetland management over the next few decades. Wetlands provide a plethora of ecosystem services, from flood protection to public access and recreation, and water quality improvement. However, they are also threatened by filling and fragmentation, sea level rise, pollution and debris, stormwater runoff and invasive species.
- On the positive side, wetlands have seen an incredible increase in their regulatory protections since the 1970s. Federal and state laws limit direct destruction from filling and development of most wetlands. Unavoidable direct impacts to wetlands require mitigation. However, there is potential to improve the quality and extent of mitigation activities. The regulations also do not address ongoing loss or ensure future opportunities for conservation, through marsh migration, for example.
- The draft WMF is also a tool for communicating the importance of wetlands and streams in NYC, and provides an overview of past restoration efforts, and current conditions. It also articulates a vision for the future of no net loss of existing wetlands and improving the health of wetland systems that support the people and wildlife of NYC. The draft WMF recommends management and policy actions for each of our wetland types: salt marshes, freshwater wetlands, and streams.

- It seeks to prevent net wetland loss and plan for new wetland areas. It also recognizes the integrated nature of improving wetland health through watershed and stormwater management.
- The framework also outlines the funding, maintenance and stewardship requirements associated with maintaining and restoring the health of NYC's wetlands.

Meeting 4 - December 12, 2019

The focus of the fourth WMAB meeting in 2019 was **Management, Governance and Regulation** on the waterfront. The WMAB discussed how the regulatory process could be improved to support better outcomes as part of the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan. The WMAB also discussed how the recommendations of the previous Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, *Vision 2020*, were tracked and how success could be measured after the next plan is released.

Waterfront Regulations – Current Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

- Members discussed how “Pilot Project” framing and programs could help minimize risks and uncertainty with waterfront projects by enabling them to work within the existing regulatory framework while advancing more innovative shoreline design. The “Saw Mill Creek Pilot Mitigation Bank” and the “Randall’s Island Living Shoreline pilot project” were cited as two examples of successful pilot projects. Members, however, noted that pilot projects can be stymied for many reasons, including monitoring requirements, which can be expensive to maintain for the duration of the pilot project.
- Members suggested that regulatory agencies need to be better equipped to consider the “big picture” rather than just focusing on site-by-site review. Members also noted that there can be a lot of overlap between regulatory agencies, which can create confusion and redundancy.
- Members also suggested rethinking what waterfront access means, noting a preference for more in-water access. They acknowledged that doing so could require changes to current regulatory and legal frameworks. Members noted that if access were to include boat ramps and tie ins it would open up opportunities for recreation, education, and stewardship. Members also cited wayfinding and a broader public information campaign as ways to improve awareness of existing waterfront resources and improve the connection residents have to their waterfront.
- For industrial areas, where waterfront access may be limited or prohibitive, members suggested identifying opportunities for access with a lighter touch such as visual access to the waterfront and educational programming. Both, members suggested, would help increase public engagement and awareness of the working waterfront (e.g. Sims Recycling).
- Members also noted a need to design waterfront public spaces to be floodable in the short-term and sited with future sea level rise in mind.

The Working Waterfront

- WMAB members highlighted some of the emerging challenges and opportunities facing the maritime industry in NYC, including the development of offshore wind and other renewable energy infrastructure. Members stressed the importance of planning for waterfront infrastructure, especially given spatial needs for these emerging uses and the spatial needs of other uses including dry docks, shipyards, and other vessel maintenance facilities. Members noted that the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan has a 10-year vision that may align with the growth of offshore wind and should consider how this could affect the maritime industry in NYC.
- There was also interest in promoting more freight movement by barge rather than by truck. A member suggested that this could be achieved by dredging port facilities and maintaining

navigational channels to meet port growth projections. This member suggested that secondary channels such as Newtown Creek, Gowanus Canal, and Westchester Creek should also be dredged to increase their potential for transportation.

- Members also expressed interest in a uniform maritime construction code to ensure that continuity and consistency can be achieved through rules and regulations. Members suggested that the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan could start by advocating for local code that aligns/cross-references with State/Federal standards to support the development of a range of typologies (energy storage, floating structures, permanently moored vessels) to inform the design and construction of shoreline and in-water projects.

Improving Government Oversight

- The meeting concluded with a brief discussion about how government oversight could be improved. Some members suggested that the way to do so was for the City to create a dedicated agency or office to lead, manage, and coordinate all waterfront plans and projects. These members suggested that such an office would help address the many waterfront coordination challenges that plans and projects can face. Other members questioned the need for a dedicated agency or office, indicating a preference for maximizing the unique skill sets and capacities of the existing city agencies involved in waterfront plans and projects and empowering them to work across multiple levels of government.

WMAB Member Biographies

Eric Johansson, Maritime College, State University of New York

Captain Johansson is a third generation Port of NY/NJ Captain and Distinguished Service Professor at Maritime College. He holds a Master of Science in International Transportation Management and is the innovative and forward-leaning founder of the annual SUNY Maritime College Towing Forum, now in its 19th year. Published funded research projects include: Hunts Point Terminal Market: The Demand for Waterborne Transportation as a Part of the Outbound Distribution System, Offshore Wind Development and Research, Economic Impact of Siltation on NYC's Small Waterways, Maritime Support Service Location Study (MSSLS), and Economic Analysis Brooklyn Navy Yard". In addition to his research, Captain Johansson serves on many local maritime committees such as Harbor Safety Committee, Energy Subcommittee, and Harbor School Professional Advisory Committee and National Maritime Committees.

Mychal Johnson, South Bronx Unite

Mychal Johnson has a long-standing track record in community-based advocacy for environmental, economic and social justice in the South Bronx. He is a co-founder of South Bronx Unite and a member of the Board of Directors of the Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the NYC Community Land Initiative, the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, and the Watershed Advisory Committee of the Park's Department Harlem River Watershed and Natural Resources Management Plan and the Community Advisory Board of Columbia University's NIEHS Center for Environmental Health in Northern Manhattan. Mychal was also appointed as a civil society voting member of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Open Space Committee. He advocates for greater access to green space, truly affordable housing and quality of life enhancing efforts without gentrification in the South Bronx.

Jessica Katz, Executive Director

Jessica Katz is the Executive Director of the Citizens Housing Planning Council (CHPC). CHPC aims to develop and advance practical public policies to support the housing stock of the city by better understanding New York's most pressing housing and neighborhood needs. Prior to joining CHPC, Jessica served as the Associate Commissioner for New Construction from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). In that role, she oversaw the creation of thousands of units of affordable and special needs housing—serving everyone from the formerly homeless to middle-income New Yorkers. She previously held a variety of roles at HPD, including as Assistant Commissioner of Special Needs Housing, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner for Preservation Finance.

Edward Kelly, Maritime Association of NY/NJ Harbor

Edward J. Kelly is the Executive Director of the Maritime Association of the Port of New York/ New Jersey, and is responsible for managing the diverse activities of the Association and helping to develop the enhanced safety, security, ecological sustainability, and economic viability of the many maritime-related industries in our Port. Ed has devoted many years as a Director of the New York Shipping Association, the Carriers Container Council, the USMX, and the Steamship Operators Intermodal Committee. He has served on many joint labor / management committees and trust funds. He is also currently serving as a member of NOAA's Hydrographic Services Review Panel. Ed also serves as an Industry Advisor to the Urban Assembly School for Global Commerce, and SUNY Maritime College. Ed completed his MBA studies at Pace University in New York City, and holds a certificate in Intermodal Transportation from the FDR Institute.

Aaron Koffman, The Hudson Companies, Inc.

Aaron is a Principal and heads Hudson's affordable housing arm totaling over 4,000 units – including the 4 largest solar PV systems on multi-family projects in New York State. Aaron is the project lead on several large affordable housing/ mixed-use new construction developments in the city including: the 992-unit La Central development in the South Bronx, the 740-unit Spofford Detention Center Redevelopment in Hunts Point and the 56-building affordable preservation portfolio in central Brooklyn. Aaron is a New York State Volunteer Firefighter who earned his Bachelor of Arts in Economics from UC Berkeley and his Master of City Planning from MIT. Aaron also serves on the Boards of the NYU Furman Center, Coro New York, and the Center for Urban Pedagogy.

Roland Lewis, Waterfront Alliance

Roland Lewis is the President and CEO of the Waterfront Alliance. A lifetime New Yorker, Roland has been at the helm of the Waterfront Alliance since its founding in 2007. Under his leadership, the Waterfront Alliance has organized a powerful constituency for a more resilient, accessible, and equitable New York Harbor. The organization has instituted programs, initiated and helped create a new waterfront plan for the City of New York, and become the leading waterfront policy organization in the New York region, known nationally and internationally. A graduate of Columbia University, he then went on to earn both a Master of City and Regional Planning and a Juris Doctor from Rutgers University. He served as co-chair of Housing First! and is on the board of the Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York.

Pete Malinowski, Billion Oyster Project

Pete grew up farming oysters with his parents on the Fishers Island Oyster farm. After graduating from Vassar college, he began working at the New York Harbor School where he founded the Aquaculture and Oyster Restoration Programs. After 5 years as a public school teacher, Pete left Harbor school in 2014 to develop Billion Oyster Project where he is now Executive Director. Billion Oyster Project is a non-profit

organization dedicated to restoring oyster reefs to New York Harbor through public education initiatives. Based on Governors Island, it has grown into a region-wide initiative involving over 75 schools, 80 restaurants and thousands of community members working together to restore New York's once great oyster population. Pete also serves as a Co-Chair on the Governors Shellfish Restoration Council.

Dr. Geeta Mehta, Columbia University

Dr. Geeta Mehta is an adjunct professor of architecture and urban design at Columbia University. Geeta's research focuses on Social Capital, and bringing to center stage its role in enhancing neighborhoods, public health, education, skill empowerment, and resilience to climate change and other shocks. Geeta is the innovator of Social Capital Credits (SoCCs), a community currency for social good that is being used in USA, India, Ghana, Kenya through Asia Initiatives, an NGO she founded. Geeta is also the co-founder of "URBZ: User Generated Cities", that works with underserved communities to help improve neighborhoods through advocacy and better public spaces and homes.

Michael Northrop, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Michael Northrop is Program Director for the Sustainable Development grant-making program at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund where he focuses on climate change. Michael has been a Lecturer at Yale University's Forestry and Environmental Studies School, Executive Director of Ashoka, an international development organization that supports "public sector entrepreneurs;" and an Analyst at First Boston, an investment bank in New York City. Michael serves on New York City's Sustainability Advisory Board and on the boards of the Rainforest Action Network, Inside Climate News, and Princeton-in-Asia. Michael has an MPA and a BA from Princeton University.

Kate Orff, SCAPE Landscape Architecture & Urban Design

Kate Orff is the Founder of SCAPE, a landscape architecture and urban design firm based in Lower Manhattan. SCAPE's work has focused on the ecological and social revitalization of urban water bodies, and combining public space and new forms of participation. Kate is also an Associate Professor and Director of Columbia University GSAPP's Urban Design Program. Kate was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2017, the first given in the field of Landscape Architecture. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political and Social Thought from the University of Virginia with Distinction and earned a Master in Landscape Architecture from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.

Debi Rose, New York City Council

Councilmember Debi Rose serves as Deputy Majority Leader in the New York City Council, representing the North Shore of Staten Island. Subsequent to her re-election in November 2017, Councilmember Rose was appointed Chair of its Committee on Youth Services and a member of the Council's Committees on Aging, Education, Justice System and Transportation, as well as the Council's Budget Negotiating Team. As former Chair of the Committee on Waterfronts, Council Member Rose sponsored legislation to reactivate the Waterfront Management Advisory Board to ensure that New York City is harnessing the full value of its immense waterfront. Councilmember Rose is a second-generation Staten Island native and the first African American from Staten Island elected to any public office. She also served on Staten Island's Community Board 1 for 28 years and the Community School Board for 13 years.

Rafael Salamanca Jr., New York City Council

Rafael Salamanca Jr. is the Councilmember for the 17th District of the New York City Council, representing the South Bronx. Beginning his career working in healthcare to expand access for low-income and working families, Councilmember Salamanca then went on to serve as the District Manager

for Bronx Community Board 2. He also previously served as the President of the 41st Precinct Council, working closely with the NYPD and other local leaders to help improve public safety in the community. On the Council, Salamanca has fought for new, good-paying jobs by requiring that companies investing in the community hire local residents, including our youth. Councilmember Salamanca has fought to bring affordable housing to the South Bronx, focusing on ensuring residents of all incomes have access to new apartments.

Peggy Shepard, WE ACT

Peggy Shepard is co-founder and executive director of WE ACT For Environmental Justice and has a long history of organizing and engaging Northern Manhattan residents in community-based planning and campaigns to address environmental protection and environmental health policy locally and nationally. She has successfully combined grassroots organizing, environmental advocacy, and environmental health community-based participatory research to become a national leader in advancing environmental policy and the perspective of environmental justice in urban communities — to ensure that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment extends to all. Her work has received broad recognition: the Jane Jacobs Medal from the Rockefeller Foundation for Lifetime Achievement, the 10th Annual Heinz Award For the Environment, the Dean's Distinguished Service Award from the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, and Honorary Doctorates from Smith College and Lawrence University.

Paul Sieswerda, Executive Director

Paul Sieswerda is the Executive Director of New York's Gotham Whale - an advocacy group that combines citizen activism and science by collecting research data throughout the area. Gotham Whale seeks to improve the health of New York's environment, for the betterment of humans and marine life. Growing up, Paul discovered his passion for marine life as a recreational SCUBA diver and spent much of his working life leading educational and research programs with aquariums. After retirement from that field, Paul founded Gotham Whale under the Staten Island Zoological Society and works on expanding his organization from year to year.

Kellie Terry, Surdna Foundation

Kellie began her career at THE POINT CDC in 2002, a non-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the South Bronx through arts & culture, youth development and community development. In 2004, Kellie became Executive Director, overseeing organizational development, fundraising, arts based and environmental justice campaigns for the agency for over ten years. Kellie went on to join The Surdna Foundation as a Program Officer on The Sustainable Environments Team in 2015 where she currently works to support equity and sustainability efforts nationally. Kellie has completed the Executive Leadership Development Program with Columbia University's Institute for Non-Profit Management, The We Are The Bronx Fellowship Program and has received recognition for her work from institutions such as El Diario la Prensa, New York City's largest and oldest Spanish-language daily newspaper. Kellie also served as The Board Chair of The New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and is a Board member of The Bronx River Alliance and The Norcross Foundation. A proud mother of two, Kellie currently lives in the Bronx with her two sons, Ali and Naim.

Jay Valgora, STUDIO V Architecture

Jay Valgora founded Manhattan-based STUDIO V Architecture, dedicated to the reinvention of the contemporary city. The Studio is focused on transforming and reconnecting edges, creating sustainable resilient communities, radical adaptive reuse of industrial and historic structures, and experiments in innovative fabrication. New York's waterfront provides the location of much of his most prominent work as STUDIO V has been reimagining NYC's waterfront including Astoria, Inwood, Long Island City,

Flushing, DUMBO, Gravesend, Sunset Park, and Staten Island. Jay's award-winning design of Empires Stores exemplifies his philosophy: combining historic and contemporary design, overlapping uses, and private initiatives with public and cultural spaces. Jay has a Master of Architecture from Harvard University, a Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell, and is a Fulbright Fellow.

Kelly Vilar, Staten Island Urban Center

Kelly Vilar is the founder of the Staten Island Urban Center--a community development through community involvement organization focused on the betterment of urban neighborhoods of Staten Island. She is a former member of Staten Island's Community Board No. 1 and served as chair of the Youth Committee forwarding the first North Shore Youth Agenda. In 2015, Kelly formed the Let's Rebuild Cromwell Community Coalition and authored the proposal to develop a Maritime Education, Recreation & Cultural Corridor aka MERC for Staten Island's North Shore waterfront. Kelly is vice chair of the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, a multidisciplinary center for global afro descendent culture integrating arts, education and activism. Kelly holds a Master's Degree in Urban Policy & Planning from the New School for Social Research and has extensive experience in youth and community development.

Henry Wan, NY Dragon Boat Festival

Henry Wan is a Builder/Developer of affordable housing, Construction Manager, General Contractor, Property Manager and Real Estate consultant, active in NYC since 1980. He has built and renovated over a thousand affordable housing dwelling units, both privately and under HPD and NYC Housing Partnership programs. He is a Registered Architect (NY), a member of American Institute of Architects and graduated from the University of Illinois with M. Arch. and B. A. Henry Wan is also a Founding Board Member of the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York Inc., since 1991.

Dr. Judith Weis, Rutgers University

Dr. Judith S. Weis is a Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, Newark. She received her BA degree from Cornell, and MS and PhD from NYU. She has published over 200 scientific papers, two technical books, and books for the general public about salt marshes, fishes, crabs, and marine pollution. She is interested in stresses in estuaries and salt marshes, and their effects on organisms, populations and communities. She is interested in shorelines – natural, restored, hardened, and “living shorelines” and the services they provide, including biological diversity and resilience. Research includes effects of contaminants on behavior and ecology; marsh grasses as habitat; invasive marsh plants effects, mostly in NY/NJ. She serves on the editorial board for BioScience, and is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She chairs the Science Advisory Board of NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection, and co-chairs the Science & Technical Advisory Committee of the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program. In 2016, she received the Merit Award from the Society of Wetland Scientists.

About DCP

DCP plans for the strategic growth and development of the City through ground-up planning with communities, the development of land use policies and zoning regulations applicable citywide, and its contribution to the preparation of the City's 10-year Capital Strategy. DCP promotes housing production and affordability, fosters economic development and coordinated investments in infrastructure and services, and supports resilient, sustainable communities across the five boroughs for a more equitable New York City.

Among its responsibilities, DCP is responsible for preparing a Comprehensive Waterfront Plan every ten years. The plan provides a vision for the city's waterfront for the next decade and beyond. DCP is currently developing the next Comprehensive Waterfront Plan to be released by the end of 2020. This plan aims to make New York City's 520 miles of waterfront more accessible, active and resilient.