

# Community and Cultural Resources: How did we get here?

Gowanus and its surrounding neighborhoods are places rich with community and cultural resources, including schools, ecology, parks and open space, historic buildings and arts and cultural uses. These resources not only serve those who live and work in the community, but also contribute to the neighborhood’s distinctive character and identity.

## Arts and Culture

Within the past few decades, Gowanus has become a hub for artists and creative industries. The arts and cultural landscape is diverse and includes a wide variety of artists and artisans, cultural institutions, educational institutions and non-profit organizations.

## Parks and Open Space

Parks serve as important resources for providing much-needed access to passive and active recreation. Today, Gowanus has a dearth of open space. Existing parks, such as Thomas Greene Playground and Nicholas Naquan Heywards Jr. Park, provide residents and workers recreational space to be active and places to relax.

## Schools and Youth Development

The NYC School Construction Authority (SCA) has identified needs for the construction of new school seats in District 15, including in the subdistrict that contains Gowanus. To plan for population growth, future school capacity will be assessed along with ways to meet projected needs.

## Historic Resources

Gowanus’s history and ecology, from a natural estuary and battleground of the Revolutionary War to its rich industrial past and current diverse mixed-use nature, are reflected in its built fabric, uses and stakeholders. As Gowanus evolves into its future, the framework and subsequently the Neighborhood Plan will identify strategies to remember and honor this rich history through various approaches to preservation and historic interpretation.



Whole Foods Waterfront Public Access Area



The Old Stone House in J.J. Byrne Playground



Thomas Greene Playground



Mural on Degraw Street and 4th Avenue



The Old American Can Factory, 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue



PS 372 on Carroll Street

# Community and Cultural Resources Framework Goals and Strategies

## Goal 1: Promote arts and cultural uses for all community members

- Expand space opportunities for art and cultural uses, including increasing access to space at City facilities, public art opportunities in open spaces and encouraging arts and cultural uses in major new developments
- Create new community space and programming for NYCHA residents, including reopening the Gowanus Houses community center

## Goal 2: Support the growth and maintenance of parks and open space

- Facilitate the creation of an open space network with a waterfront esplanade along the Gowanus Canal.
- Connect parks and public areas through an open space green network
- Evaluate needs of existing parks and strategic opportunities for new open space on City-owned land.



In May 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed legislation requiring the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) to lead the creation of New York City's first comprehensive Cultural Plan. From August 2016 to June 2017, nearly 200,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life provided feedback on the future of arts and culture in NYC. CreateNYC incorporated this public input and an evaluation of the city's cultural assets in a comprehensive cultural plan. CreateNYC is an exciting opportunity to create a long term roadmap for promoting greater equity, access, diversity and vibrancy and expanding opportunities for all New Yorkers to access and participate in the city's rich cultural life

## Goal 3: Plan for schools and youth development

- Assess existing school capacity and identify opportunities to meet future needs.
- Identify opportunities for schools to act as community hubs that reflect the neighborhood's arts, industrial and artisan character.



In June 2017, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) released its diversity plan, Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools. As part of the plan, the D15 Diversity Plan process has been established to create a community-based middle school diversity plan for School District 15 in Brooklyn and help shape district-level policies across New York City.

## Goal 4: Develop strategies that recognize, interpret and celebrate the neighborhood's history and explore a range of historic preservation tools

- Identify historic interpretation and placemaking strategies to reflect Gowanus's rich history.
- Explore opportunities to preserve historic buildings
- Align zoning and land use to help facilitate efforts to preserve and adaptively reuse buildings.



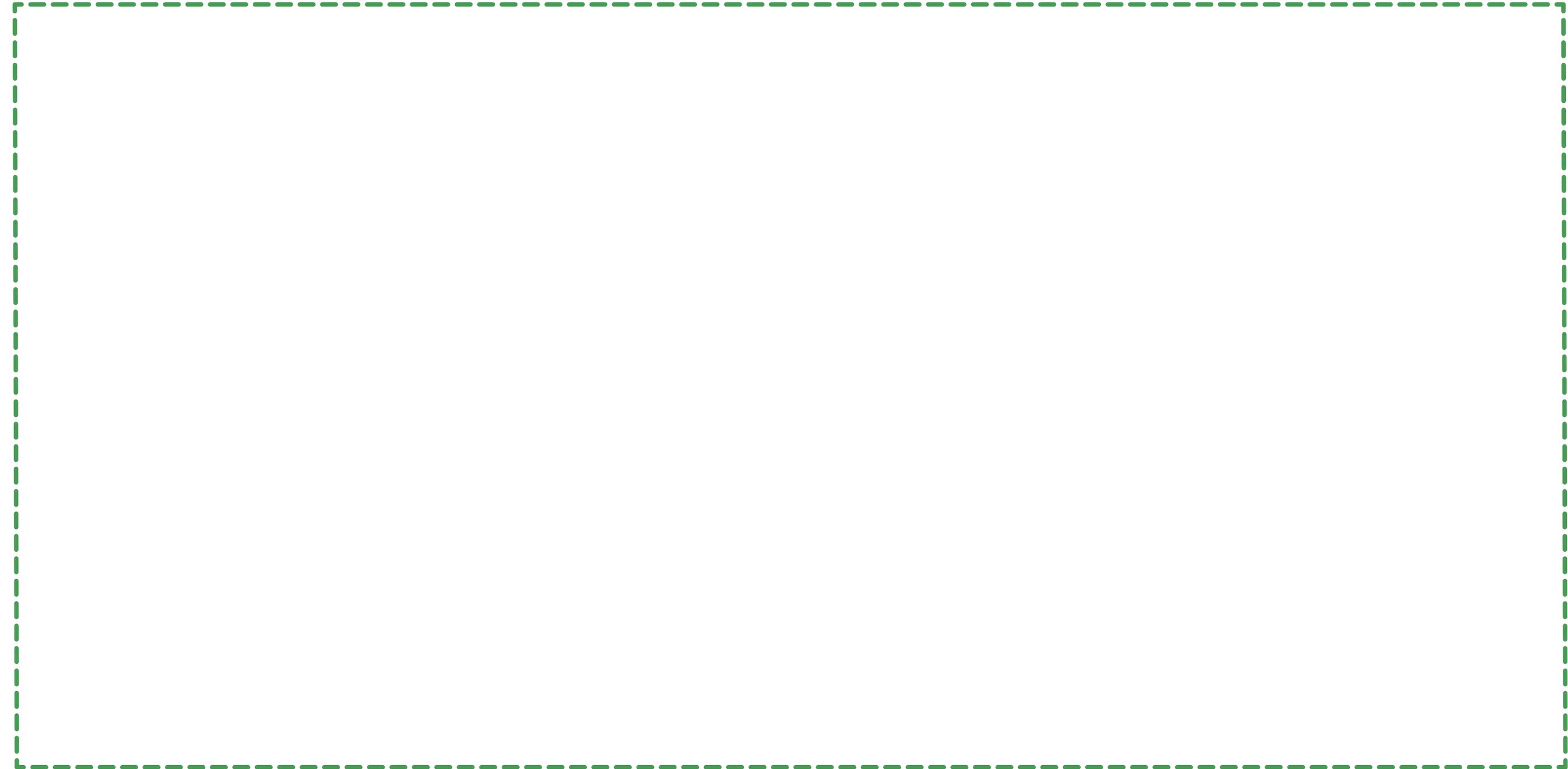
The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is pleased to announce that the reconstruction of St. Mary's Playground (see photo) is complete and the park has re-opened with new play equipment, benches and pavements. St. Mary's Playground is located along Smith Street by Huntington Street. In addition, Ennis Park, located near 3rd Avenue between 11th and 12th streets, is currently undergoing renovation, which is expected to take one year to complete.

# Help us take it to the next step!

Your participation and input will help in the development of the Gowanus Neighborhood Plan

Questions to help you get started:

- Are you part of an organization or do you know any partners that could help advance some of these strategies?
- What ideas do you have that can help advance a particular goal or strategy?
- Which strategy or goal is a priority for you and why?



Please visit [PlanGowanus.com](http://PlanGowanus.com) to continue to provide feedback and input  
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