

EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY PROJECT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS: WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS

MAY 19, 20, & 28 2015

DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT

PROJECT AREA 2 (from E14th St to E23rd St)

KEY STATISTICS:

05/19 Community Engagement Workshop at Washington Irving High School

- 49 sign-ins (counts exclude City & consultant team members but include media (2) and elected officials reps. (2))
- 28 activity sheets collected
- 24 voting ballots collected

WORKSHOP FORMAT:

The ESCR project team presented a series of flood protection options for Project Area 2. Using activity sheets and interactive models, participants engaged in small roundtable discussions where they collectively discussed the pros and cons of each flood protection type. A second set of roundtable discussions focused on neighborhood connections in Project Area 2, with an emphasis on key access points to Stuyvesant Cove Park: the pedestrian connections at E23rd St, E20th St, and Ave.C & FDR Drive.



KEY FINDINGS:

1. Flood protection types:

- Participants preferred non-mechanized flood protection systems that would stay in place
- Groups voiced concerns about the reliability of a flood protection system which would be deployed manually
- Flip-downs were generally seen as too risky, given that one panel can compromise the whole system
- The 'Elevated Park' option had the most participant support

2. Parking under the FDR Drive:

- There were many differing opinions on the parking under the FDR Drive
- Many participants value the parking spaces (although few use them personally)
- Several groups noted that displacing the parking would affect the funding agreement for the park
- On the other hand, many participants, and CB6 leadership, have advocated for removing the parking

3. Neighborhood Connections:

- Participants' key concern is pedestrian and cyclist safety
- E23rd St and Ave.C & FDR Drive are not ADA accessible and very challenging to navigate with children
- An overwhelming majority of participants feel most comfortable crossing at E20th St
- When asked which intersection most needs to be improved, a majority voted for Ave. C & FDR Drive

1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

WIGGLE WALL

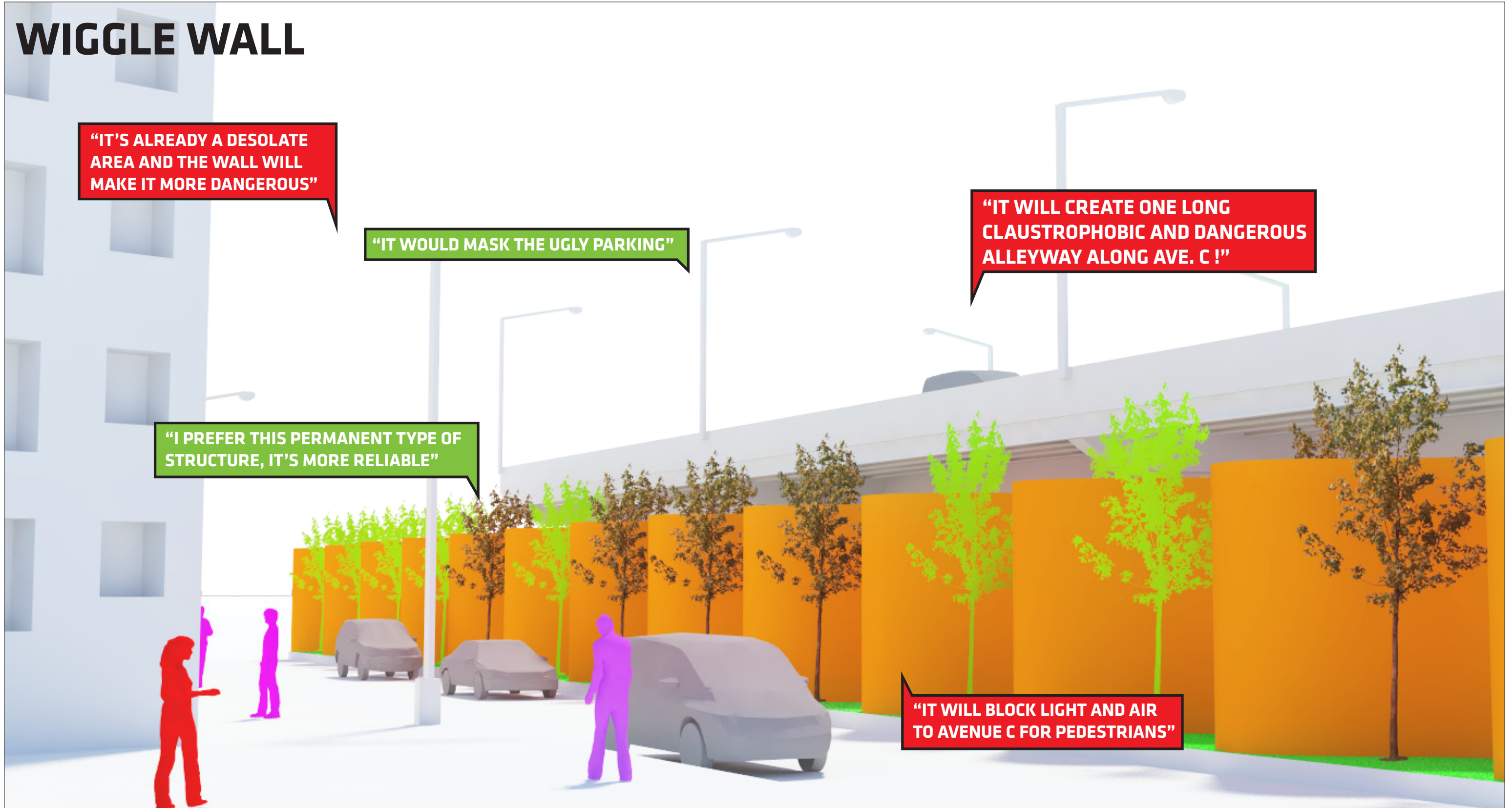
"IT'S ALREADY A DESOLATE AREA AND THE WALL WILL MAKE IT MORE DANGEROUS"

"IT WOULD MASK THE UGLY PARKING"

"IT WILL CREATE ONE LONG CLAUSTROPHOBIC AND DANGEROUS ALLEYWAY ALONG AVE. C !"

"I PREFER THIS PERMANENT TYPE OF STRUCTURE, IT'S MORE RELIABLE"

"IT WILL BLOCK LIGHT AND AIR TO AVENUE C FOR PEDESTRIANS"



1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

FLIP-DOWN CANOPY

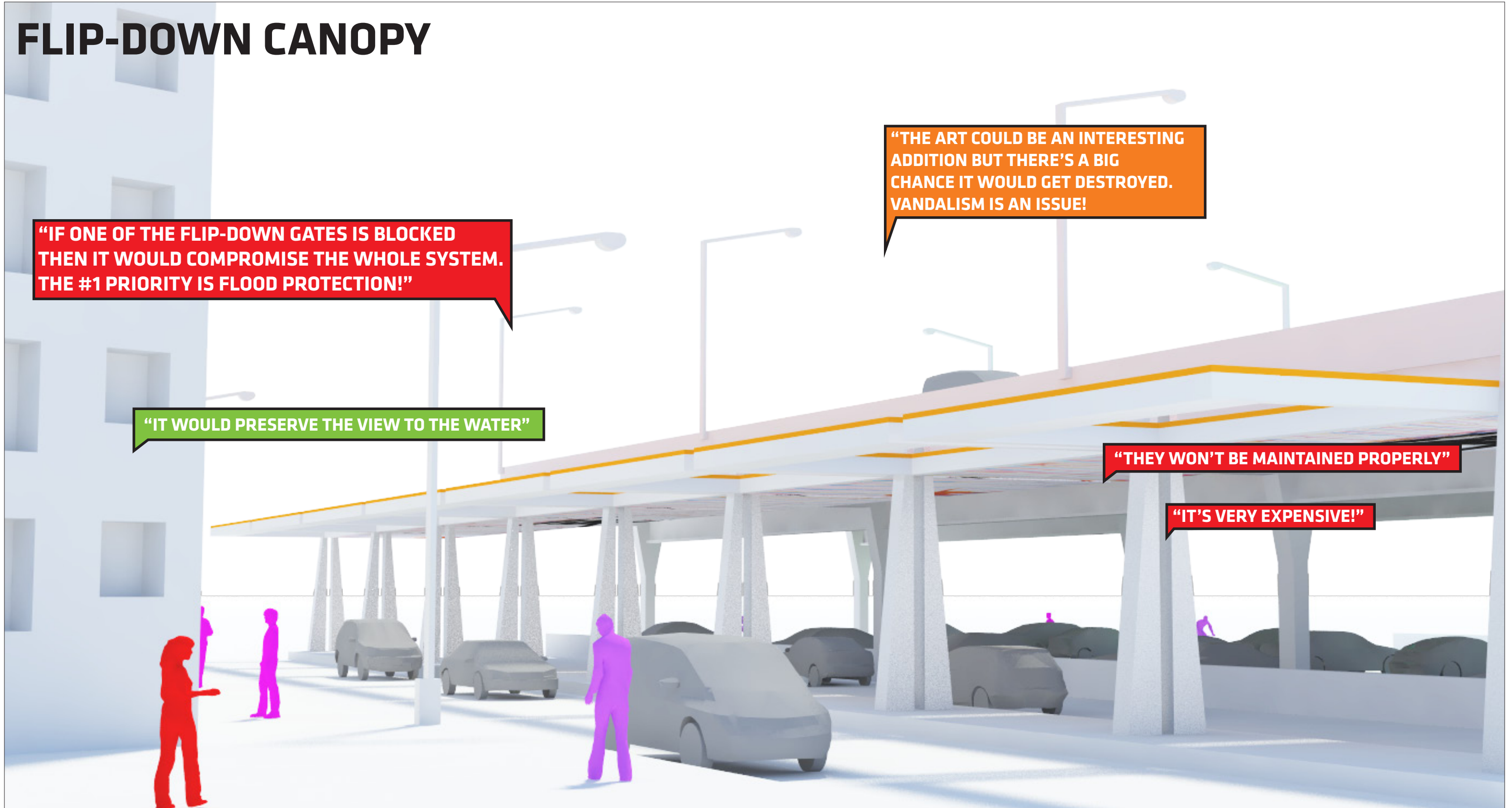
"IF ONE OF THE FLIP-DOWN GATES IS BLOCKED THEN IT WOULD COMPROMISE THE WHOLE SYSTEM. THE #1 PRIORITY IS FLOOD PROTECTION!"

"IT WOULD PRESERVE THE VIEW TO THE WATER"

"THE ART COULD BE AN INTERESTING ADDITION BUT THERE'S A BIG CHANCE IT WOULD GET DESTROYED. VANDALISM IS AN ISSUE!"

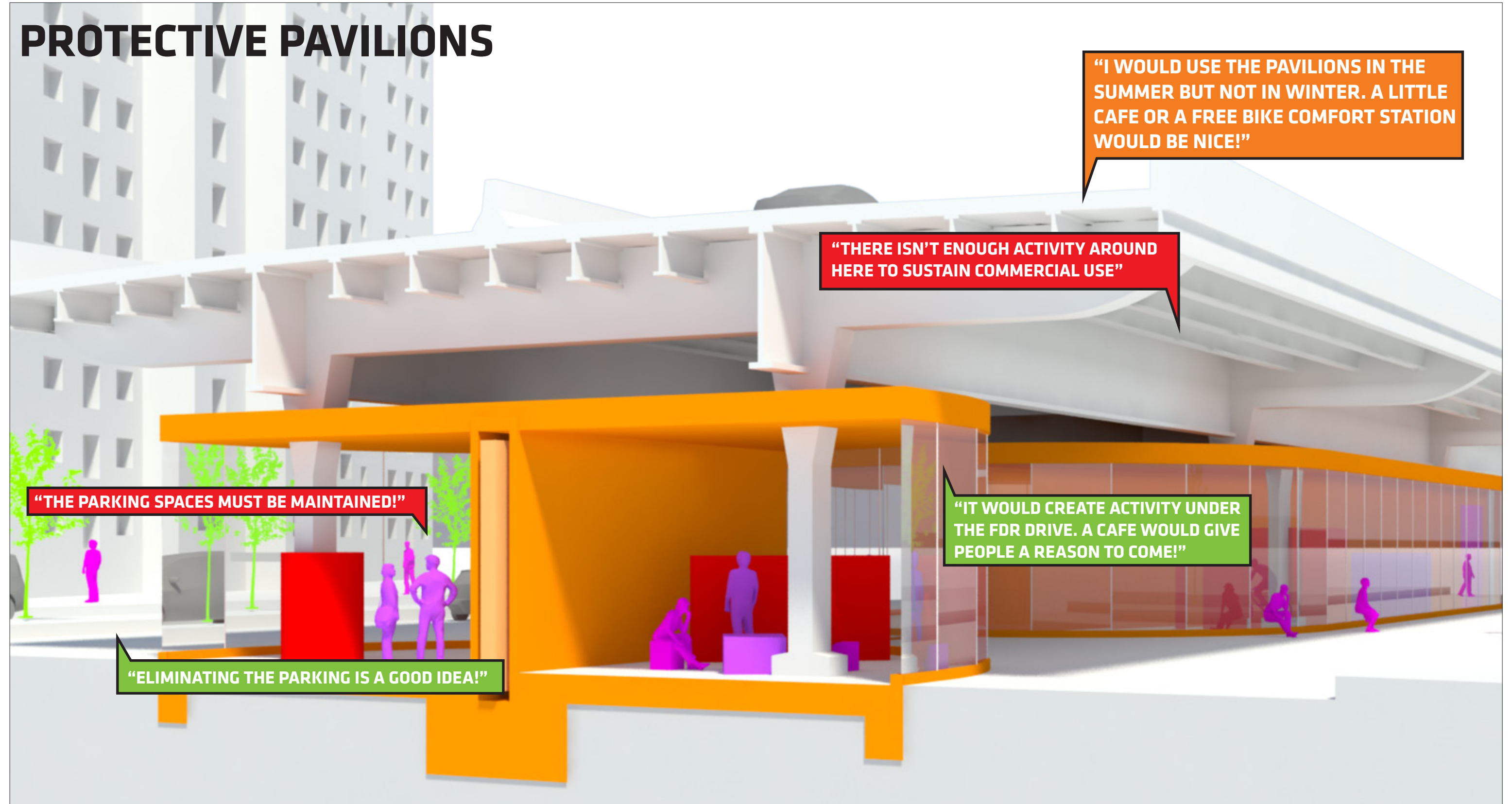
"THEY WON'T BE MAINTAINED PROPERLY"

"IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE!"



1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

PROTECTIVE PAVILIONS



"I WOULD USE THE PAVILIONS IN THE SUMMER BUT NOT IN WINTER. A LITTLE CAFE OR A FREE BIKE COMFORT STATION WOULD BE NICE!"

"THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ACTIVITY AROUND HERE TO SUSTAIN COMMERCIAL USE"

"THE PARKING SPACES MUST BE MAINTAINED!"

"IT WOULD CREATE ACTIVITY UNDER THE FDR DRIVE. A CAFE WOULD GIVE PEOPLE A REASON TO COME!"

"ELIMINATING THE PARKING IS A GOOD IDEA!"

1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

BIG BENCH

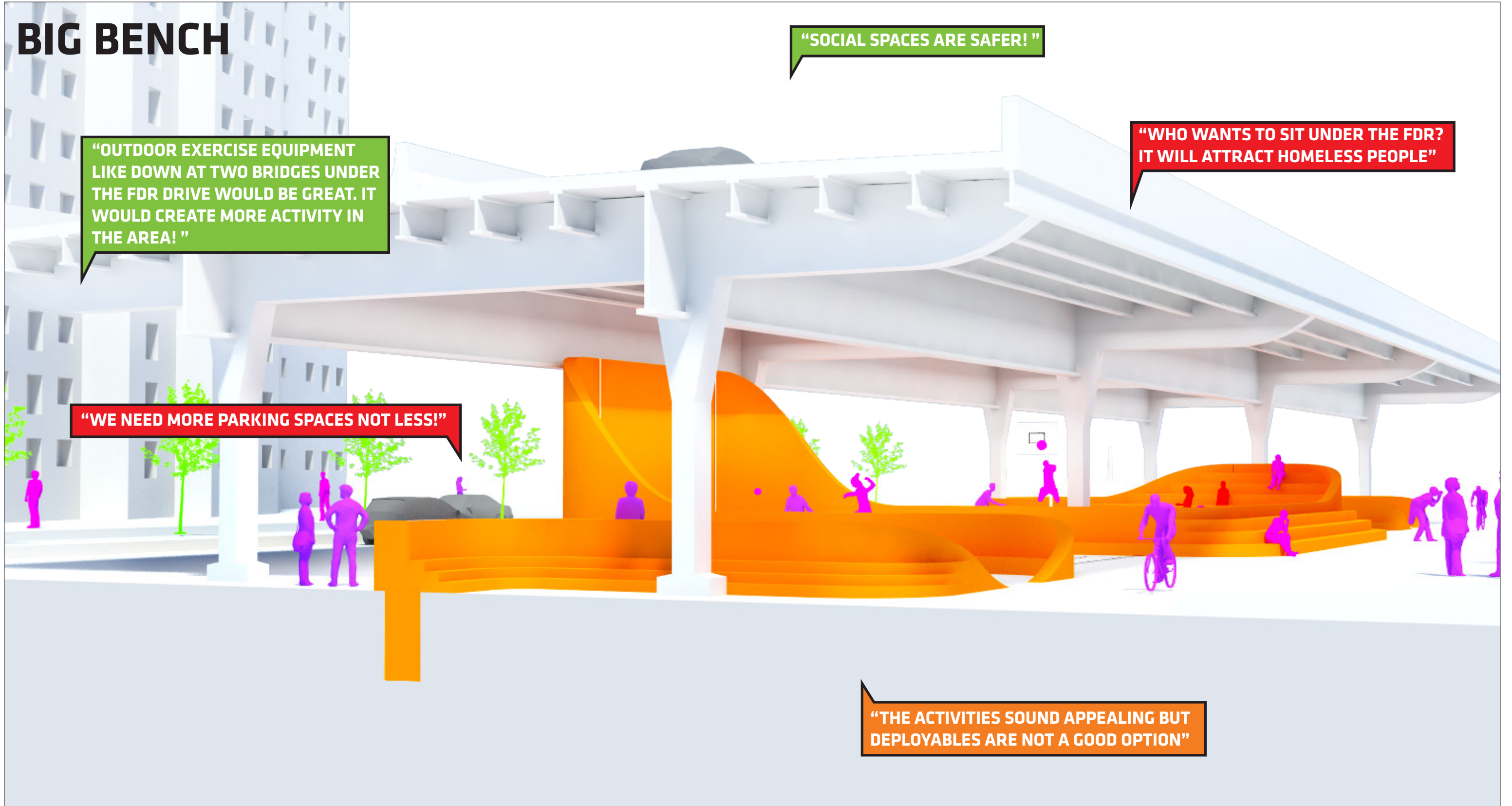
“OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT LIKE DOWN AT TWO BRIDGES UNDER THE FDR DRIVE WOULD BE GREAT. IT WOULD CREATE MORE ACTIVITY IN THE AREA!”

“SOCIAL SPACES ARE SAFER!”

“WHO WANTS TO SIT UNDER THE FDR? IT WILL ATTRACT HOMELESS PEOPLE”

“WE NEED MORE PARKING SPACES NOT LESS!”

“THE ACTIVITIES SOUND APPEALING BUT DEPLOYABLES ARE NOT A GOOD OPTION”



1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

FLIP-DOWN

"THE FLIP-DOWNS WOULD PRESERVE VIEWS TO THE WATER, BUT WHO WILL MAINTAIN THEM? THE MOVEABLE PARTS SEEM RISKY"

"IT MAINTAINS THE VIEWS TO THE PARK AND WOULD OFFER MORE SEATING!"

"THIS OPTION DOES NOT SEEM VERY RELIABLE"

"THEY ARE TOO EASY TO BREAK AND TOO EXPENSIVE"

"IT WOULD MAINTAIN THE PARKING!"

"THIS RETAINS THE PARKING!"



1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

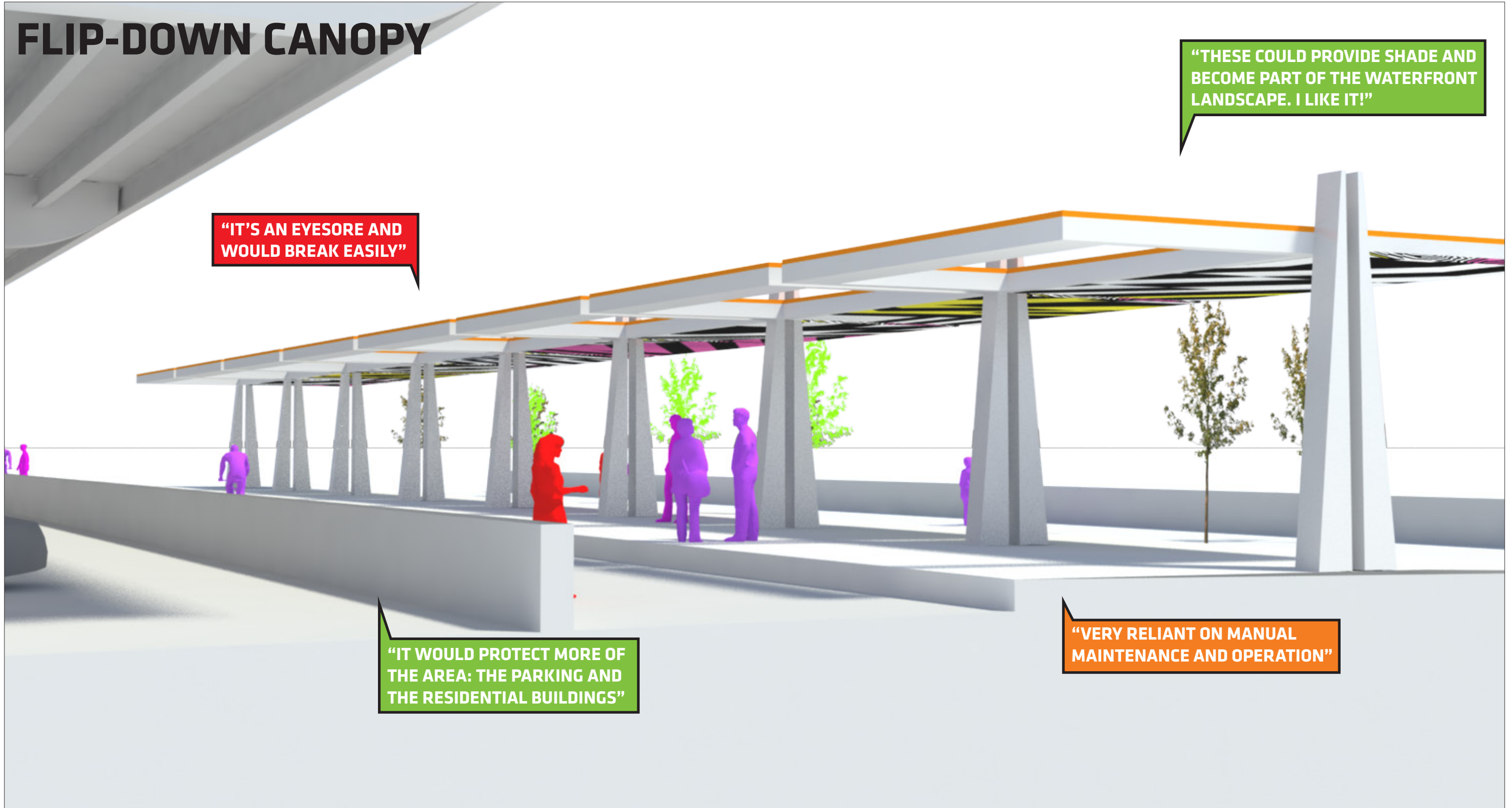
FLIP-DOWN CANOPY

"IT'S AN EYESORE AND WOULD BREAK EASILY"

"THESE COULD PROVIDE SHADE AND BECOME PART OF THE WATERFRONT LANDSCAPE. I LIKE IT!"

"IT WOULD PROTECT MORE OF THE AREA: THE PARKING AND THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS"

"VERY RELIANT ON MANUAL MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION"



1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES

ELEVATED PARK

“ELEVATING STUYVESANT COVE PARK IS THE BEST SOLUTION BECAUSE IT IS PERMANENT AND HAS MASS TO ADD THINGS TO. THE TERRACED BERM CAN BE USED FOR EXERCISING OR PICNICS!”

“MOST RELIABLE AND AESTHETICALLY PLEASING!”

“YES!”

“THE PARK WILL BECOME NARROWER AND ACCESS COULD BE CHALLENGING FOR SENIORS”

“YOU CAN’T SEE THE WATER FROM THE STREET BUT ELIMINATING THE SIGHTLINES ISN’T AN ISSUE IF WE GET BETTER VIEWS FROM THE TOP!”



EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY PROJECT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS: WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS

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1. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: FLOOD PROTECTION TYPES SUMMARY

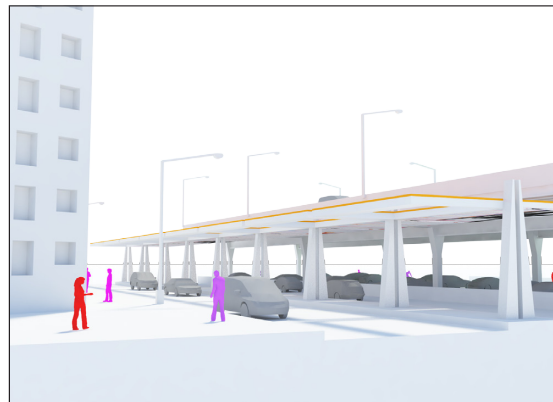
During the community engagement session on 05/19, the ESCR project team presented a series of flood protection options under consideration for Project Area 2 (from E14th Street to E23rd Street). Using activity sheets and interactive models, participants engaged in small roundtable discussions where they collectively discussed the pros and cons of each flood protection type. The key findings, as summarized below, will help the design and engineering team refine the flood protection alternatives for Project Area 2.



ALONG THE MEDIAN: WIGGLE WALL

While participants highly valued the reliability associated with a permanent form of flood protection, many worried that a Wiggle Wall would create an uninviting and potentially dangerous corridor along Avenue C. Multiple tables stressed that the loss of waterfront views would negatively impact perceived safety and quality of life for residents of lower floor apartments in Peter Cooper Village and Stuyvesant Town.

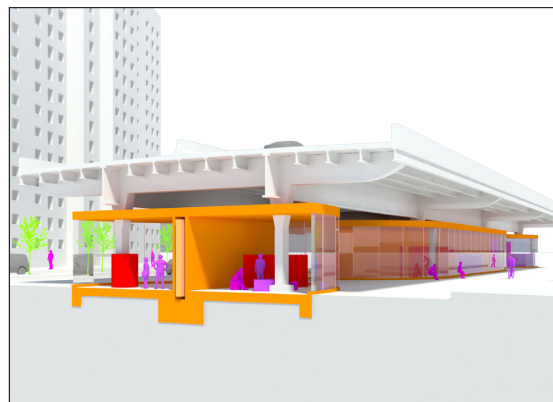
“It will create one long claustrophobic and dangerous alleyway along Avenue C!”



ALONG THE MEDIAN: FLIP-DOWN CANOPY

Participants appreciated that the flip-down canopy would preserve views to the waterfront and showed some interest in the integration of artwork, but this option, as a uniform solution, was generally met with tepid support. Many of the discussions revolved around the lack of reliability of flood protection systems which consist of multiple individual parts. Participants reiterated that they had more confidence in permanent in-place solutions.

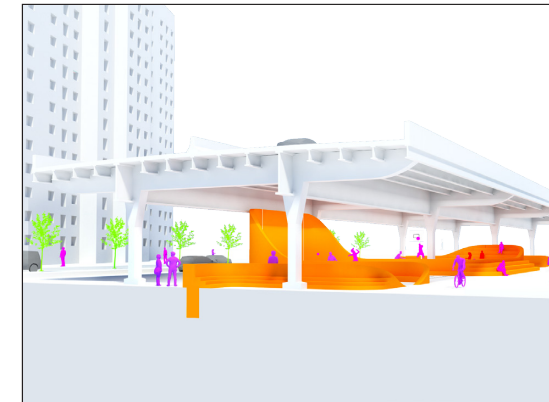
“If one of the flip down gates is blocked, then it would compromise the whole system. The number one priority is flood protection.”



UNDER THE FDR DRIVE: PROTECTIVE PAVILIONS

While the opportunity for expanded programming under the FDR appealed to some participants, others feared the loss of parking spaces. Many tables valued increased pedestrian activity in the area but questioned the viability of year-round commercial spaces and stressed that any retail should cater to local residents and offer affordable goods/services. Some asked whether the revenue generated by the pavilions would benefit Solar One and help support park maintenance.

“I would use the pavilions in summer but not in winter. A little affordable café or a free bike comfort station would be nice.”



UNDER THE FDR DRIVE: BIG BENCH

In addition to concerns voiced about the reliability of multiple deployables, some participants believed that this option may attract undesirable uses. Others saw an opportunity to create much needed additional recreational space that would cater to teenagers, seniors, and runners (for e.g.: handball courts, bocce courts, pull-up bars etc.). The displacement of the parking spaces under the FDR remained a dividing issue.

“Outdoor exercise equipment like down at Two Bridges under the FDR Drive would be great. It would create more activity in the area.”



AT THE EDGE OF THE FDR DRIVE: FLIP-DOWN

This option was well received by participants who showed keen interest in maintaining the parking under the FDR and by those who sought to maintain a visual connection to the park/waterfront. However, a majority of participants saw the flip downs as too reliant on maintenance and operation, making them a less reliable form of flood protection.

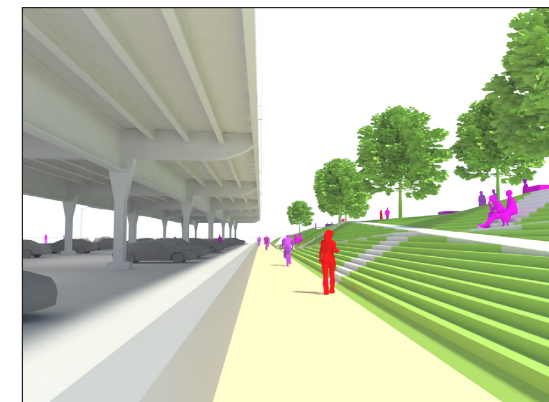
“The flip downs would preserve views to the water, but who will maintain them? The moveable parts seem risky.”



IN STUYVESANT COVE PARK: FLIP-DOWN CANOPY

Participants appreciated that, if placed in Stuyvesant Cove Park, the flip-down canopy would protect the neighborhood as well as the parking under the FDR. Some pointed out that the panels could provide shade in the summer while others disliked the idea that the footprint of the narrow park would be further reduced to allow for a linear form of flood protection. Many participants also voiced concerns about the reliability of a multi-part system.

“It would protect more of the area: the parking and the residential buildings”



IN STUYVESANT COVE PARK: ELEVATED PARK

This option had the most participant support. Participants showed great interest in a permanent and natural form of flood protection and welcomed the opportunity to develop a new landscape with terraced seating and salt-resistant species. One table voiced concerns about the potential decrease in usable park space and stressed that access ramps should be ADA compliant to cater to seniors and physically impaired residents/visitors. Another table appreciated that this option would maintain the parking under the FDR.

“Elevating Stuyvesant Cove Park is the best solution because it is permanent and has mass to add things to. The terraced berm can be used for exercising or picnics.”

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2. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS: NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS IN PA2

The second roundtable discussion focused on neighborhood connections in Project Area 2, with an emphasis on key access points to Stuyvesant Cove Park: the pedestrian connections at E23rd St, E20th St, and Ave.C & FDR Drive. A large neighborhood map highlighting key landmarks was displayed at each table, and participants were asked to share general positive and negative feedback about access to Stuyvesant Cove Park.

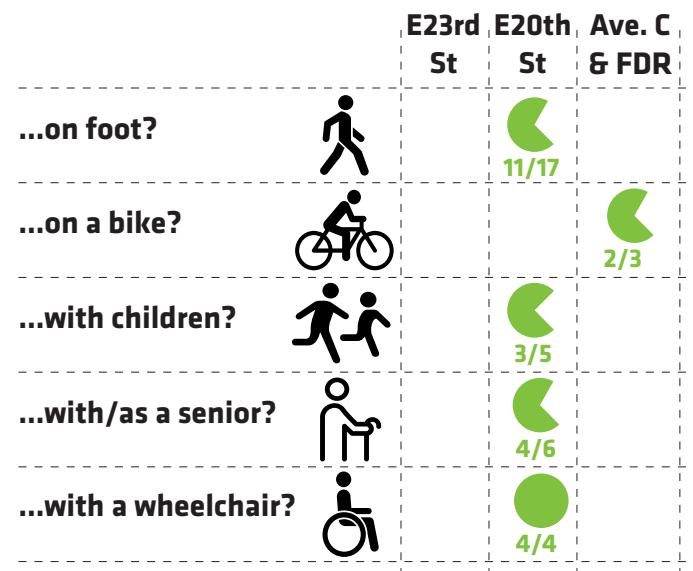
KEY FINDINGS:

- Pedestrian and cyclist safety is a key concern
- The intersections at E23rd St and Ave. C & FDR are difficult to cross with children, bikes or in a wheelchair
- Drivers exiting the FDR Drive do not reduce their speed enough when they enter the neighborhood
- A majority of participants feel most comfortable crossing at E20th St to access the park
- ADA access should be improved at all intersections

VOTE RESULTS:

During the roundtable discussions, participants were given an opportunity to respond to the two questions below. Please keep in mind that these results represent a small number of participants. The ESCR team will take this information into consideration, along with additional data collection from traffic and pedestrian studies.

Question 1: At which intersection do you feel most comfortable crossing...



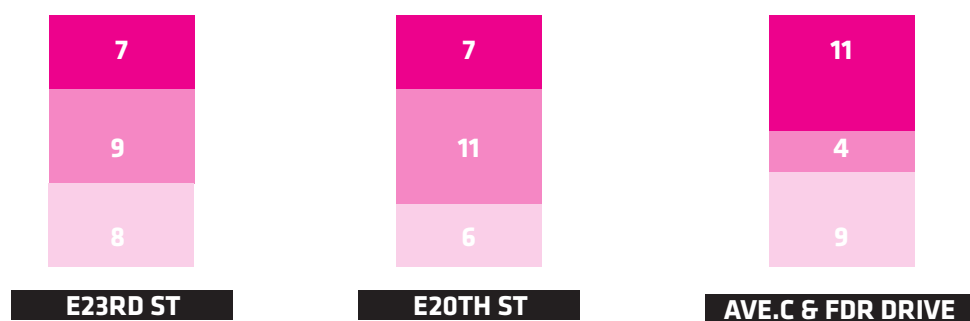
"The green lights to cross at E23rd street are not long enough. Cars are moving fast and there is less respect for pedestrians."

"The E20th street crossing is the one we all use, it would be a good focus area."

"All of the intersections are challenging to cross in a wheelchair."

Question 2: Please rank the pedestrian connections from low to high priority to indicate which of them most need to be improved in order to provide better access to Stuy. Cove Park.

Total number of participants who responded to Q2: 24 out of 49 attendees



KEY:
Number of votes for:

HIGH PRIORITY

MEDIUM PRIORITY

LOW PRIORITY

