

We live in a moment swirling with action and concern. Any number of extraordinary measures are underway to redress wrongs, guard our health, maintain our safety, and repair damage of all sorts. The closure and future planning of the FK Landfill were the result of many years of citizen action and hard political work. Suddenly we live in a different era. Re-opened FK is now receiving 7,000 tons of World Trade Center debris daily. City budgets and staffs are under heavy strain. At the same time, the issues and desires surrounding the FK closure remain strongly present. Some of these issues also deal with redressing wrongs - the decades of life on Staten Island affected by the garbage flowing from all of New York - redeemed by a huge park.

REFLECTION/VIEWS

A

There is an understandable desire among many to quickly heal things throughout the city. Frenzied efforts proceed to re-plan and rebuild the WTC site while the full extent of the damage is still being understood, physically and otherwise. One has to question this impulse to rush headlong into solving problems we may not understand yet. We should avoid hyperactivity as a way to paper over deep fissures. We need to make space for reflection prior to action, for thoughtful investigation into the nature of the problems to be solved and the topographies to be altered.

We propose the initiation of a process of learning beginning with the investigative structure of this project and continuing many years into the future to realize a new and evolving landscape growing out of the FK of today.

SEED/TENDENCY

The shifting nature of FK confounds interpretations, predictions and conviction necessary for end-of-phased scenarios. It rather calls for seeds nurtured with agility, immediacy and necessity. We recommend five seeds, each with a tendency - Event Surface, Experimental Field, Material Datum, Depositional Edge, and Tectonic Zone. Their trajectories will intersect on the site but each has the potential to negotiate its way through these intersections. The responsibility and seriousness of stewarding them matters more than the pursuit of a final form.

BOUNDARIES

For good reason, FK has been a place with tightly sealed boundaries over the last 50 years. Now however, there is a need to break down some of those barriers so that a new landscape can rejoin the larger whole of Staten Island. Preoccupation with legal and jurisdictional boundaries leads to fragmentary decision-making unrelated to a more logical domain. This project temporarily suspends concerns about who controls what in an effort to open a wide array of possibilities for the future of FK.

EXTENSION/REGION

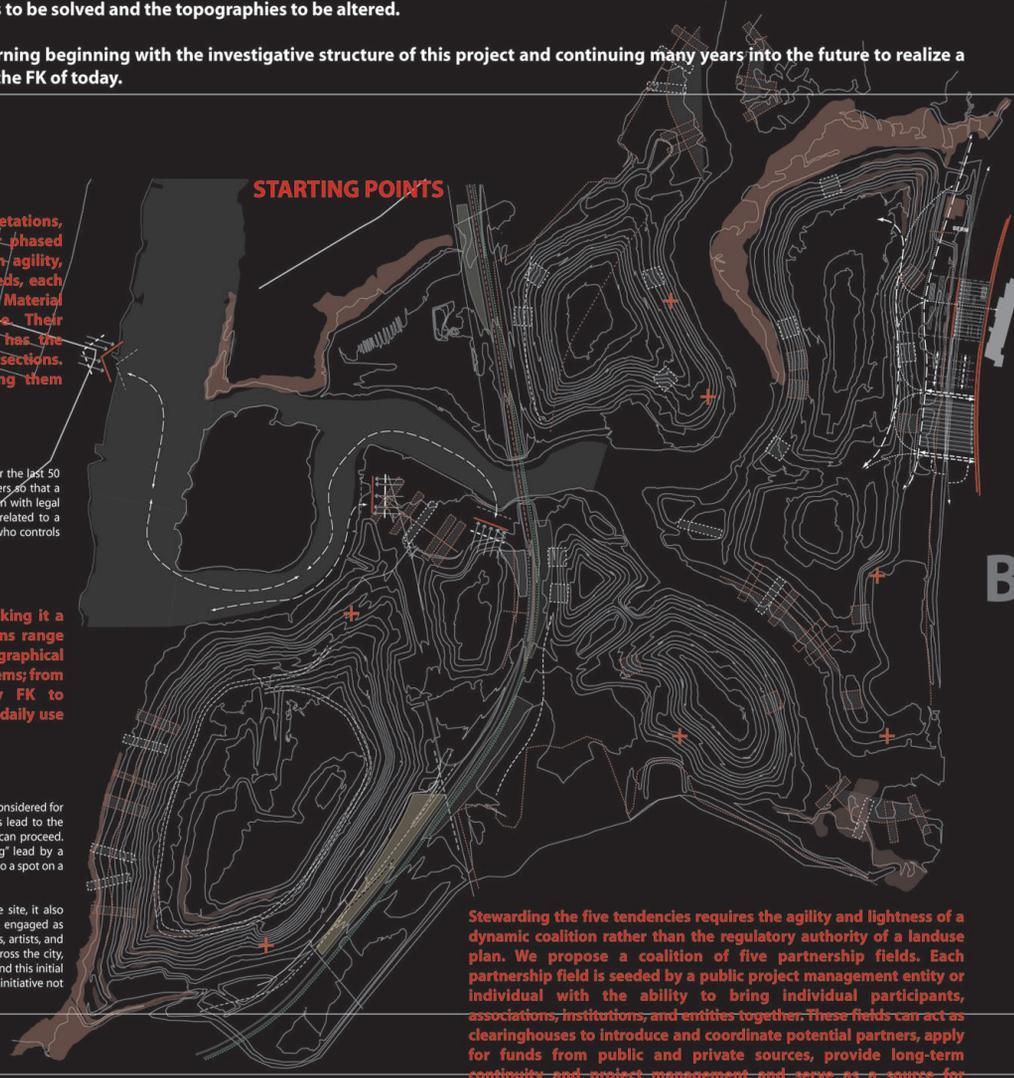
Each seed takes FK beyond its property lines, making it a transformative agent of a region. These extensions range from events that build community at various geographical scales to physical infrastructure that alleviate problems; from research and education programs that carry FK to laboratories and classrooms in distant lands to the daily use of the site by local inhabitants.

COMMUNITY

Conventional means of defining and engaging community need to be reconsidered for Fresh Kills. To hold a series of public workshops, while not useless, does lead to the convenient notion that public "input" has been achieved and the "plan" can proceed. Such a momentary forum involving "issue sorting" and "brainstorming" lead by a facilitator with note cards and magic markers finally reduces each person to a spot on a list of public comments.

In the same way that this project tries to engage the dynamics of the site, it also proposes various means by which groups as well as individuals can be engaged as actors in the process, performing as provocateurs, advocates, researchers, artists, and promoters. Whether they come from neighborhoods a block away or across the city, these are the people who will propel FK forward and give it a life far beyond this initial planning process. They should feel this is a place for their own action and initiative not a picturesque place of repose.

STARTING POINTS



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Stewarding the five tendencies requires the agility and lightness of a dynamic coalition rather than the regulatory authority of a landuse plan. We propose a coalition of five partnership fields. Each partnership field is seeded by a public project management entity or individual with the ability to bring individual participants, associations, institutions, and entities together. These fields can act as clearinghouses to introduce and coordinate potential partners, apply for funds from public and private sources, provide long-term continuity and project management and serve as a source for continuous outreach to ever-wider publics. The Office of the Borough President of Staten Island is believed to be ideally suited to lead in the establishment of these partnership fields and facilitate their dynamic coalition. However should this not be the case, other entities including but not limited to the New York City Department of Parks and recreation or a new non-profit organization similar to the Central Parks Conservancy could take on this role.

Our role as designers is to reveal and set in motion five tendencies for FK. The identification of these tendencies naturally leads to interest and design emphasis on certain types of interventions and programs as opposed to others. Yet nothing that we are proposing precludes the evolution of these ideas by economic, ecological, neighborhood or social interests that we as designers are either unaware of or cannot anticipate at this time given the decades long development time line.

C



MEMBERS / DA CORNIA - TOM LEADER STUDIO
URBAN STUDIO
ONLINE AND PERFORMED
AFFLUENT ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
LEAD LEVY

DYNAMIC COALITION

E

WHAT ABOUT GARBAGE?

Garbage is the reason this project came about. The purpose of this competition is to transform the world's biggest landfill into a different kind of civic resource. But where does the garbage go now? New Jersey, Virginia? Where after that? Is it right to plan a great park for Fresh Kills and let those questions go unanswered? New York trails other big cities in waste diversion and recycling. Perhaps this project is a way to start taking more care of our own stuff, to re-engaging the material that we so easily waste.

DEPOSITIONS/ANALOGS

FK is made of many more depositions than the garbage that has acquired such notoriety. These depositions extend from a surface of soil and urban debris, through household garbage, marsh detritus, and glacial till down to rock crushed by continental drift 300 million years ago. These materials make FK a richly layered and provocative site rather than a problem awaiting the right solution. We absorb the dynamic and negotiating power of these five stratigraphies into the seeds we recommend for FK. The dynamics we uncover will inspire the public to engage FK as a rich, complex, and compelling landscape as we move into its future transformations.