

Gowanus Canal Corridor Framework

City of New York

Department of City Planning

Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination



July 2007



Gowanus Canal Corridor Planning Framework

Community Meetings:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 25 | Introduction:
Analysis of land use |
| Apr. 19 | Open space at canal's edge,
Shared goals |
| May 31 | Shaping a planning framework:
Opportunities and challenges |
| Today | Planning framework:
Guiding principles |





Gowanus Canal Corridor Planning Framework

What is the framework?

A set of guiding principles that reflect:

- Shared goals
- Practical challenges
- An understanding of the entire corridor

The framework will provide:

- Standards for evaluating proposals for zoning changes
- A basis for formulating such proposals

Framework is not itself a rezoning

- Zoning changes will require full public review – land use review (ULURP) and environmental review (CEQR)

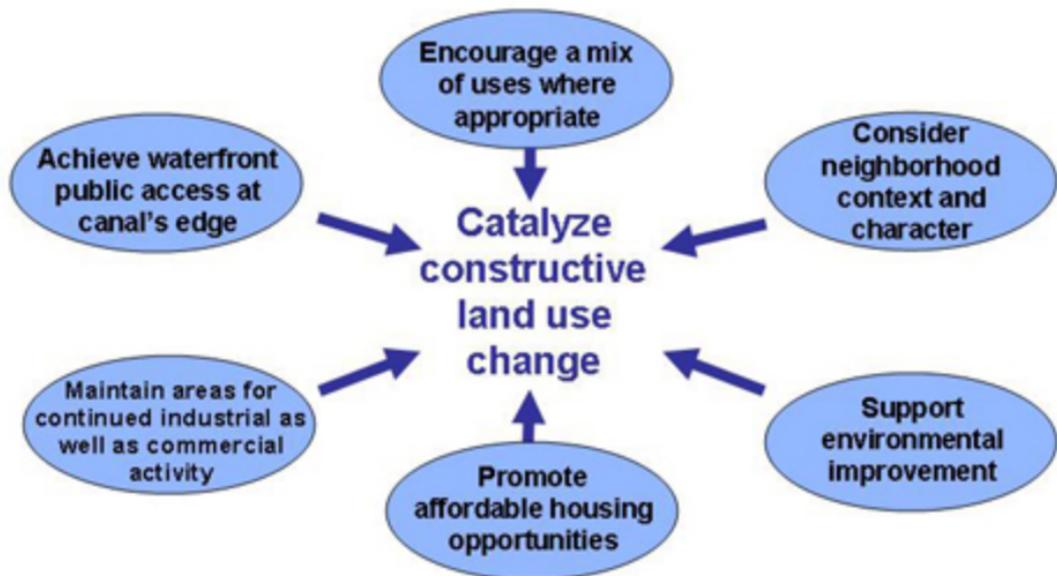


Shared Goals





Shared Goals





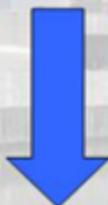
Shaping a Planning Framework

Opportunities

- Reactivate vacant and underutilized sites
- Clean up contaminated land
- Achieve public access to canal's edge
- Promote affordable housing

Challenges

- Private ownership of land
- Costs of cleanup and improvement
- Variety of conditions on canal sites
- Balance among shared goals



Guiding Principles

To catalyze and guide constructive land use change

Planning Framework - Land Use



Industrial activity

- Categories from site visits / visual inspection
- Heaviest activity in southern portion of study area
- Additional concentration in northeast portion of study area



Categories based on site visits / visual inspection



Planning Framework – Land Use



Maintain areas for continued industrial/commercial activity

Encourage mix of uses where appropriate



Planning Framework – Land Use

Opportunities

- Reactivation and reuse of underutilized sites
- New residential or mixed use where it can complement existing uses
- Support continued industrial and commercial activity
- Reinforce mixed-use character

Challenges

- Ensuring compatibility of new uses
- Addressing transitions between residential and industrial/commercial uses



Guiding Principles:

- New housing or mixed use could occur in A, B, D-west
- In other portions of the area, maintain M zones for industrial as well as commercial uses (E is part of IBZ)
- Encourage a mix of uses where appropriate: residential, commercial, community facility, light industrial; including arts-related uses
- Promote transitions between uses





Planning Framework – Environmental Issues

Opportunities

- Redevelopment provides powerful incentive for site cleanup
- Land remediation prevents cross-contamination
- Funding sources (e.g. Brownfield Cleanup Program)
- PlaNYC initiatives

Challenges

- High cleanup costs of contaminated sites
- CSOs and stormwater management
- Management of development in low-lying areas (flood zone regulations)



Guiding Principles:

- New development should support ongoing efforts to improve the environment in the Gowanus Canal Corridor
- Continue interagency coordination, communication with community on environmental issues
- Promote Best Management Practices

Note: Any future zoning changes would be required to go through City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process





Planning Framework - Affordable Housing

Opportunities

- City-owned land - Public Place site
- Inclusionary Housing program can promote affordability on private sites where sufficient density is possible

Challenges

- Limited availability of City-owned land
- Height and density need to be balanced with other goals (e.g., considering neighborhood context and character)



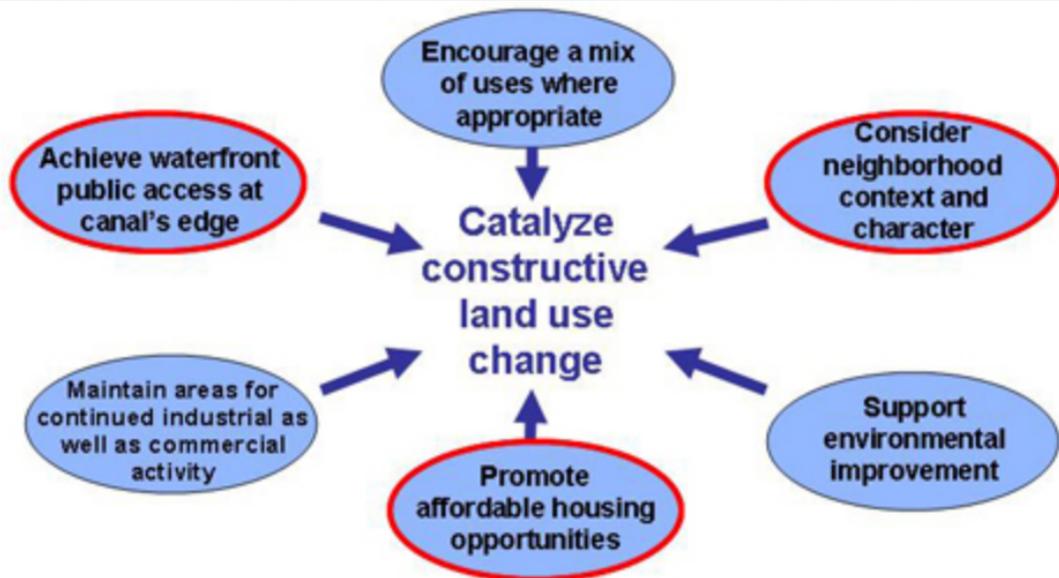
Guiding Principles:

- Include a significant affordable housing component in the redevelopment of the Public Place site (HPD)
- Actively explore use of the Inclusionary Housing program where development of a sufficient scale is possible





Urban Design – Balancing Among Goals



Identify parameters for the size and shape of new buildings that serve these goals:

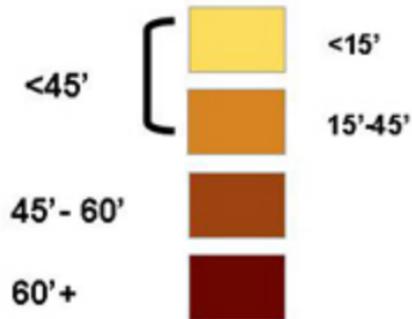
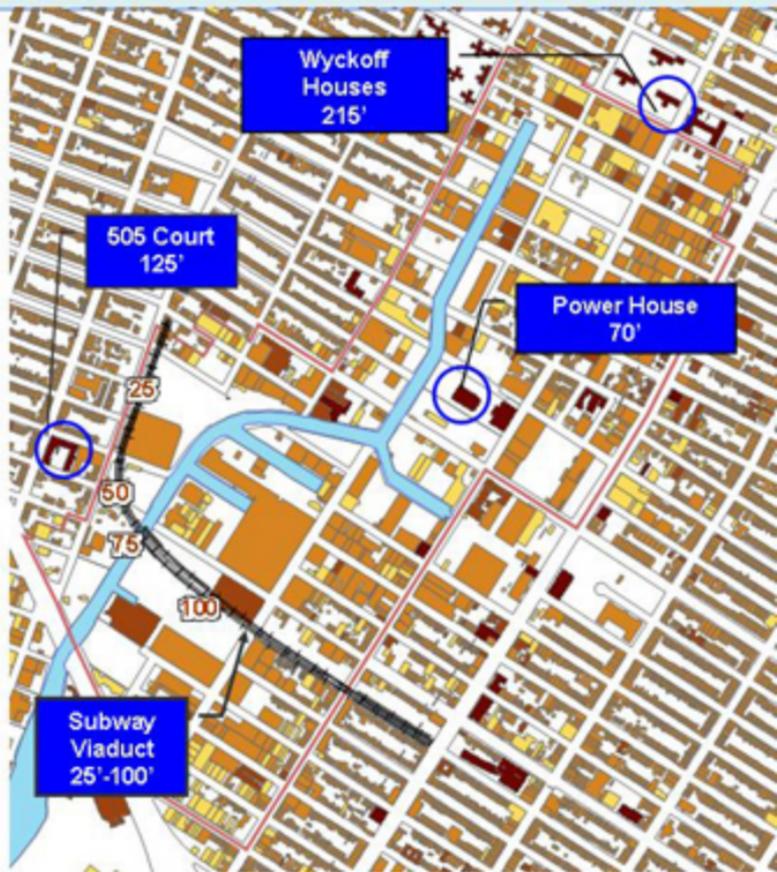
- Achieve cleanup and redevelopment on underutilized sites
- Establish limits on building heights, especially near existing low-scale housing
- Ensure harmonious relationship between waterfront open space and new buildings
- Include opportunities for application of Inclusionary Housing program





Existing Conditions – Building Heights

Existing heights



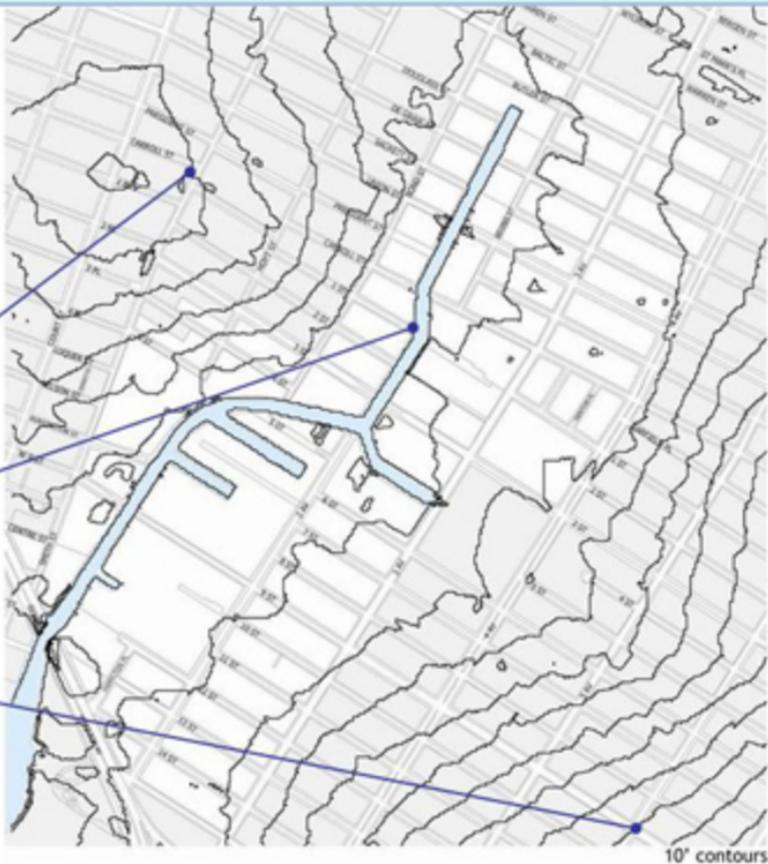
Existing Conditions – Topography

- Canal is located within a valley
- Neighborhoods slope upward to the west and east

Smith Street and Carroll Street
50 feet

Canal's edge
3-12 feet

6th Ave. & 9th St.
90 feet



10' contours



Canal and Upland Blocks



Industrial and Commercial Areas

Maintain areas for continued industrial as well as commercial activity





Mixed Use Blocks: Upland and Canal

Encourage a mix of uses where appropriate



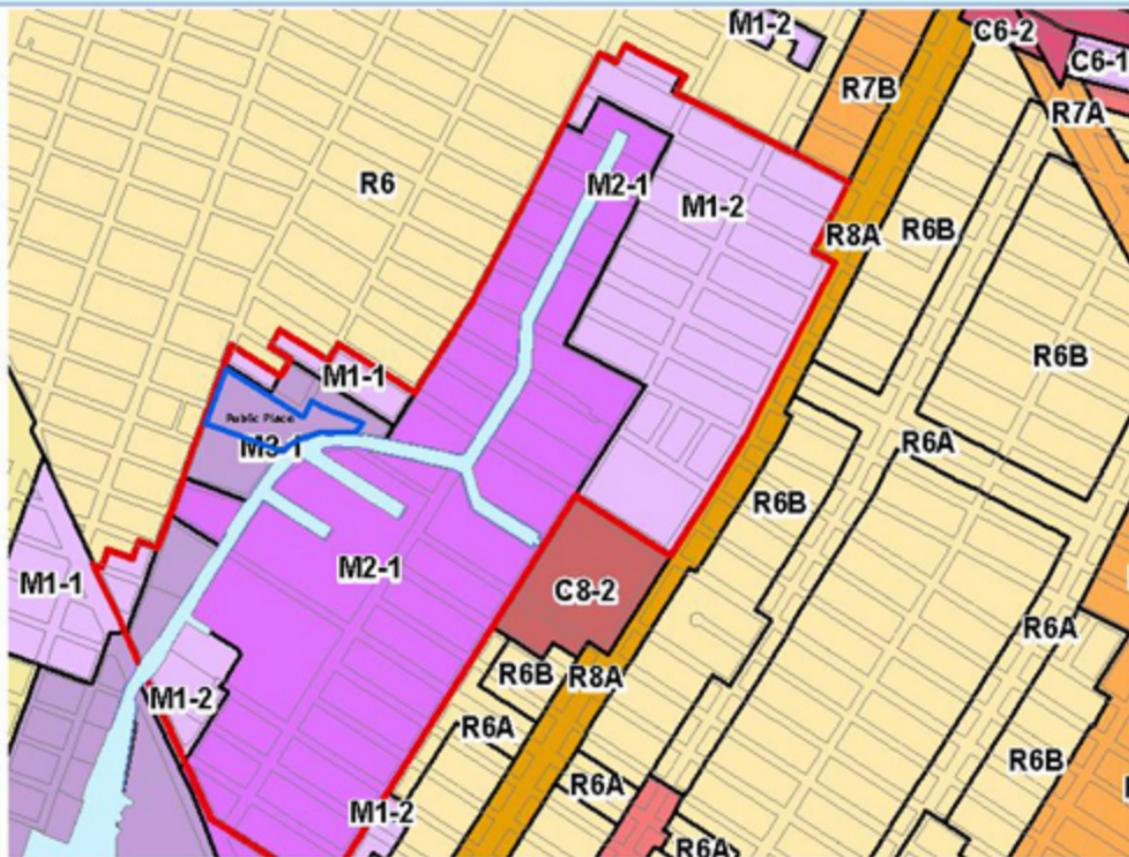


Mixed Use Blocks: Upland and Canal



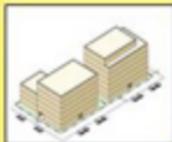


Existing Zoning

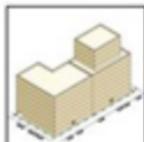
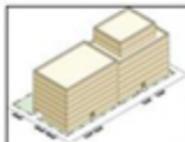




Existing Zoning – Nearby Districts



2 - 3 FAR



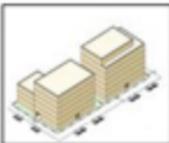
3 - 4 FAR

Approx. 6 FAR

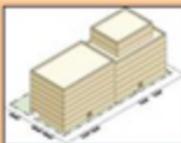




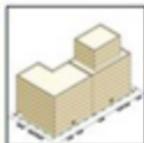
Existing Zoning – Nearby Districts



2 - 3 FAR



3 - 4 FAR

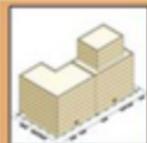
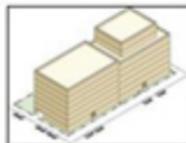
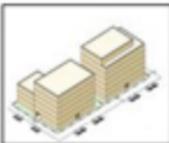


Approx. 6 FAR





Existing Zoning – Nearby Districts



2 - 3 FAR

3 - 4 FAR

Approx. 6 FAR





Upland and Canal Blocks

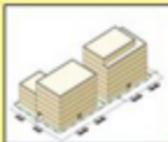


- **Upland mixed use blocks** share characteristics of nearby blocks - parameters for height and density should be similar to nearby blocks
- On canal mixed use blocks, parameters should be sufficient to address special conditions, as well as multiple goals
- Explore use of the Inclusionary Housing program where development of sufficient scale is possible
- Maintain M zones for continued activity on industrial and commercial blocks

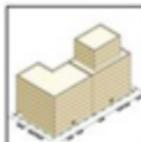
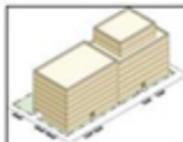




Upland Mixed Use Blocks



2 - 3 FAR



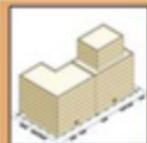
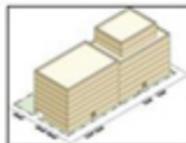
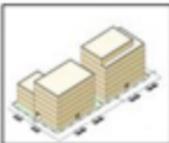
3 - 4 FAR

Approx. 6 FAR





Upland Mixed Use Blocks



2 - 3 FAR

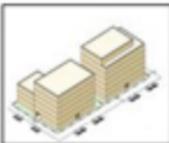
3 - 4 FAR

Approx. 6 FAR

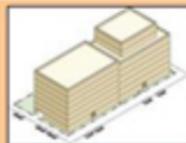




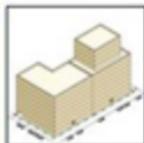
Canal Mixed Use Blocks



2 - 3 FAR



3 - 4 FAR



Approx. 6 FAR





Inclusionary Housing



- Actively explore use of the Inclusionary Housing program where development of a sufficient scale is possible





Waterfront Public Access

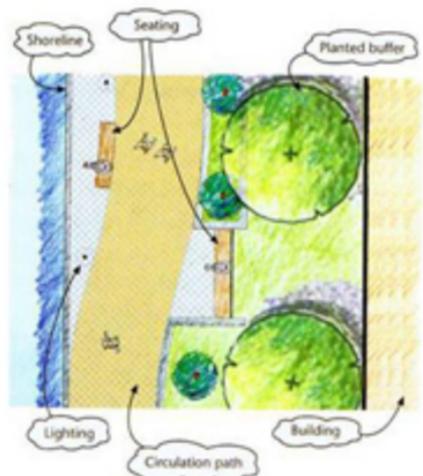


Waterfront Zoning

- City's Zoning Resolution contains a model for requiring public access on privately owned sites undergoing development
- Requirements apply to water bodies wider than 100 feet - do not currently apply to Gowanus Canal

Opportunity to achieve public access through redevelopment of sites on canal

- Adapt waterfront public access requirements to Gowanus Canal
- Developer must build and maintain





Waterfront Public Access

Provide pedestrian connections between adjacent neighborhoods and the canal via existing streets and extensions of the grid



CONNECTIONS

- EXISTING STREET
- NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION





Waterfront Public Access

Maintain visual corridors
from street grid to the
canal's edge



VISUAL CORRIDORS

 VISUAL CORRIDOR





Waterfront Public Access



Irregularly shaped and sized blocks along the canal:

Shallowest blocks on east side of canal north of Carroll Street

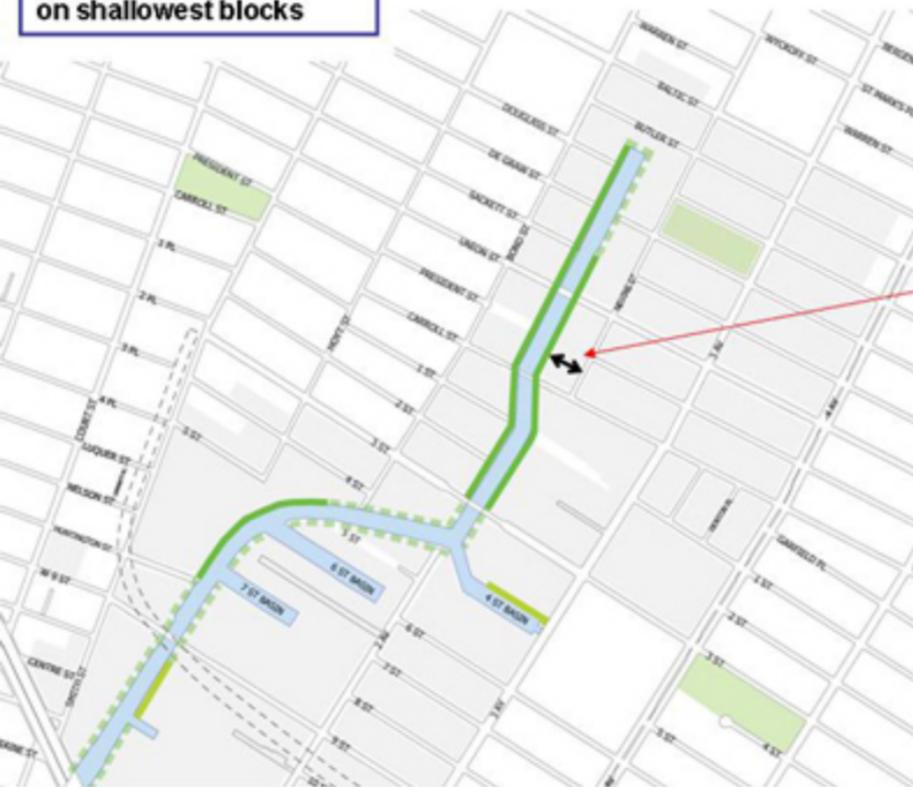
Deepest blocks south of Carroll Street





Waterfront Public Access

Allow narrower walkway
on shallowest blocks



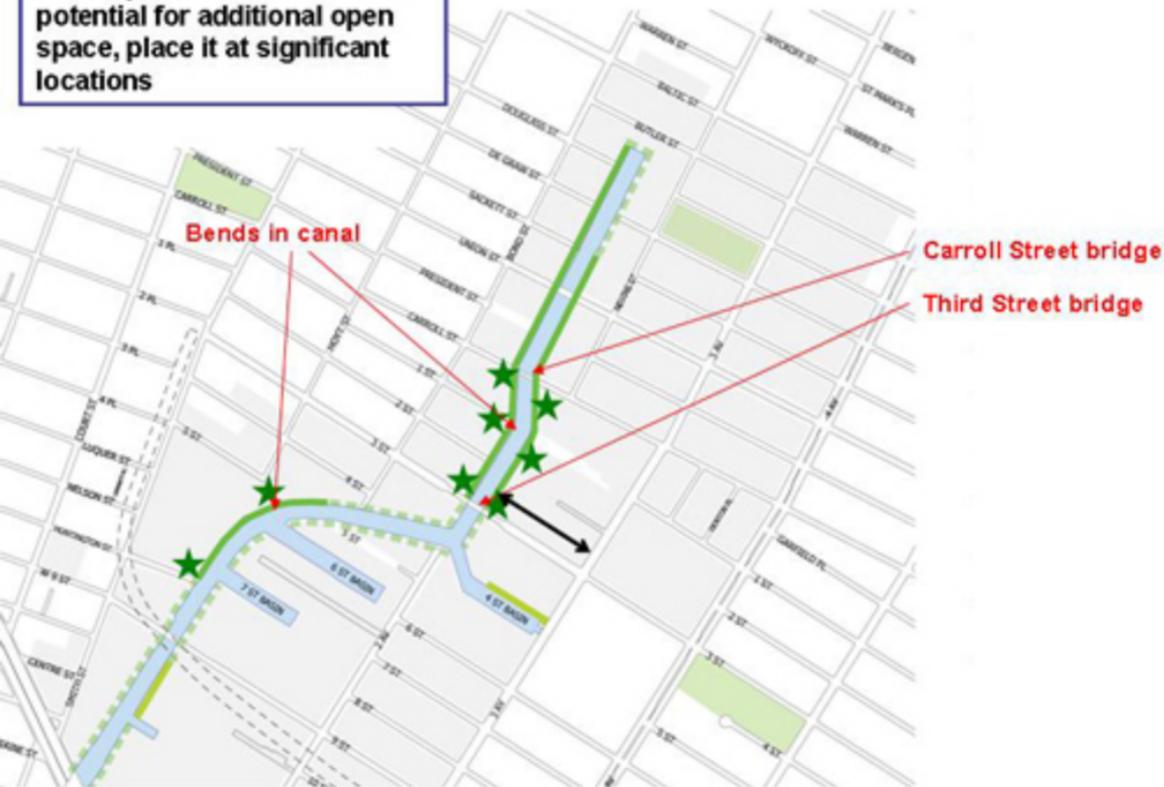
Shallowest blocks on east
side of canal north of
Carroll Street





Waterfront Public Access

On deeper sites where there is potential for additional open space, place it at significant locations





Waterfront Public Access

The character of canal should be multi-faceted – address varied character within a varied landscape

Access
Inviting
User-friendly
Accessible
Public
Free
Safe
"Community Stoop"

Free
Strolling
Walking and living
Wellness
Open

Green
Iconic
View
Aesthetic

Modern Art
Edgy
Funky
Eclectic
Creative
Artistic
Diverse

Safe
Clean
Rodent-Free
Open
Manicured

Work
Industrial
Thriving
Productive
Productive economically
Prodigious

Romantic
Neighborhood-like
Old-world
Historic
Historically responsive
Soft lighting
Recreation/relaxed
Touristic
Café

Calm
Quiet
Contemplative
Bucolic





Waterfront Public Access



Principles:

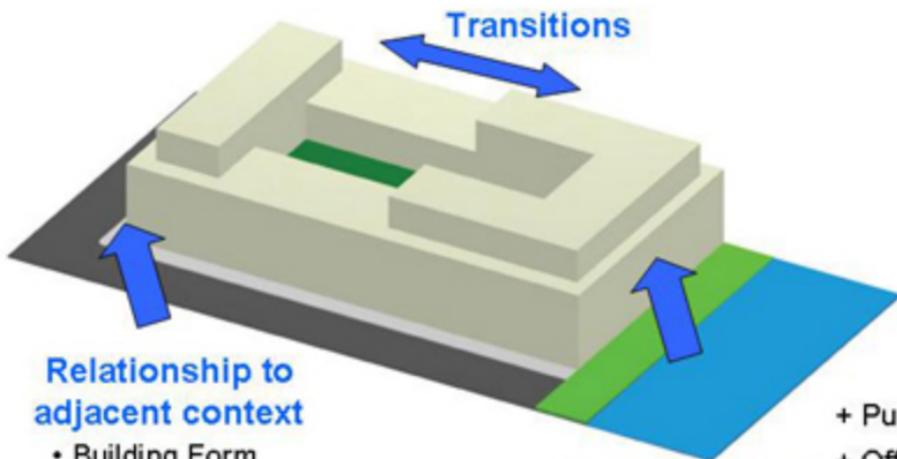
- Require public open space at canal's edge for residential and commercial developments
- Provide pedestrian connections between adjacent neighborhoods and the canal
- Maintain visual corridors from street grid to the canal's edge
- Allow narrower walkway on shallowest blocks
- On deeper blocks, where there may be opportunities for additional open space, place it at key locations
- Character of canal open spaces should be multi-faceted





Canal Sites: Balancing Among Goals

Achieve cleanup and redevelopment on underutilized sites, while addressing various goals



Relationship to adjacent context

- Building Form
- Building Height
- Street Widths

Relationship to waterfront open space

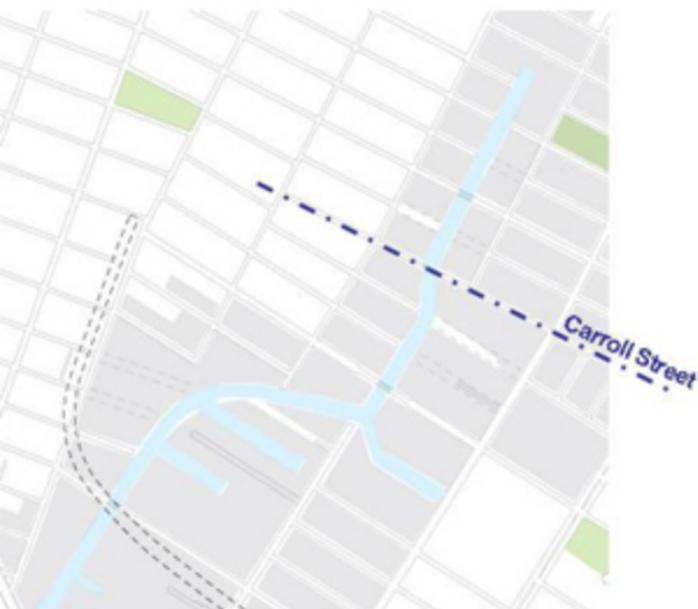
- + Public access to canal's edge
- + Off-street parking in flood zone, with "wrap" of active ground floor use
- + Inclusionary Housing program
- + Consider context





Canal Mixed Use Blocks

Existing buildings do not provide public access to the canal edge.





Canal Mixed Use Blocks

- Public Access
- 6 story limit

Most streets are 60' wide or wider

Generally limit heights of buildings to 6 stories at the street and along the canal walkway





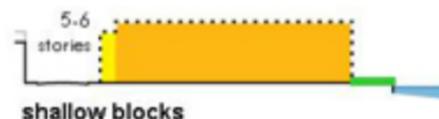
Canal Mixed Use Blocks

- Public Access
- 6 story limit
- 5 story limit

Narrow Streets

Bond Street and Nevins street are narrow at only 50 feet wide.

Limit buildings along narrow streets to 5 stories at the street



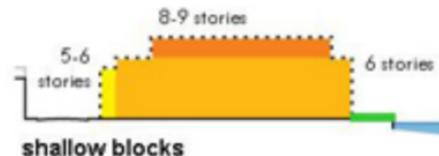


Canal Mixed Use Blocks

- Public Access
- 6 story limit
- 5 story limit
- 8-9 story limit after setback

BLOCKS NORTH OF CARROLL STREET

- Limited room for transition in heights
- 5 story height limit on narrow streets (Bond and Nevins)
- Allow portions up to 8-9 stories after setback





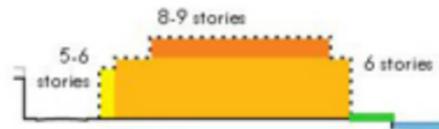
Canal Mixed Use Blocks

-  Public Access
 -  6 story limit
 -  5 story limit
 -  8-9 story limit after setback
 -  12-14 story limit *
- * Limited portions

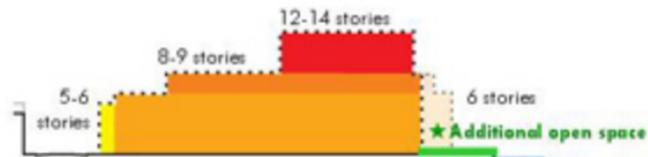


BLOCKS SOUTH OF CARROLL STREET

- Room for transitions in height
- Opportunities for additional open space, Inclusionary Housing bonus
- Allow limited portions up to 12-14 stories after setback



shallow blocks



deep blocks

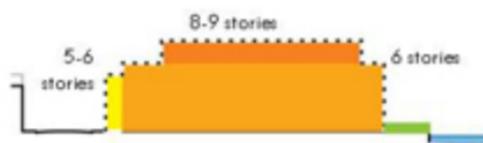




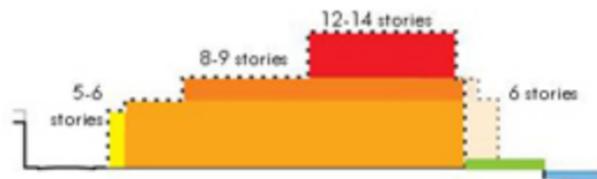
Canal Mixed Use Blocks

- Public Access
- 6 story limit
- 5 story limit
- 8-9 story limit after setback
- 12-14 story limit *
* Limited portions

SHALLOWER BLOCKS NORTH OF CARROLL ST

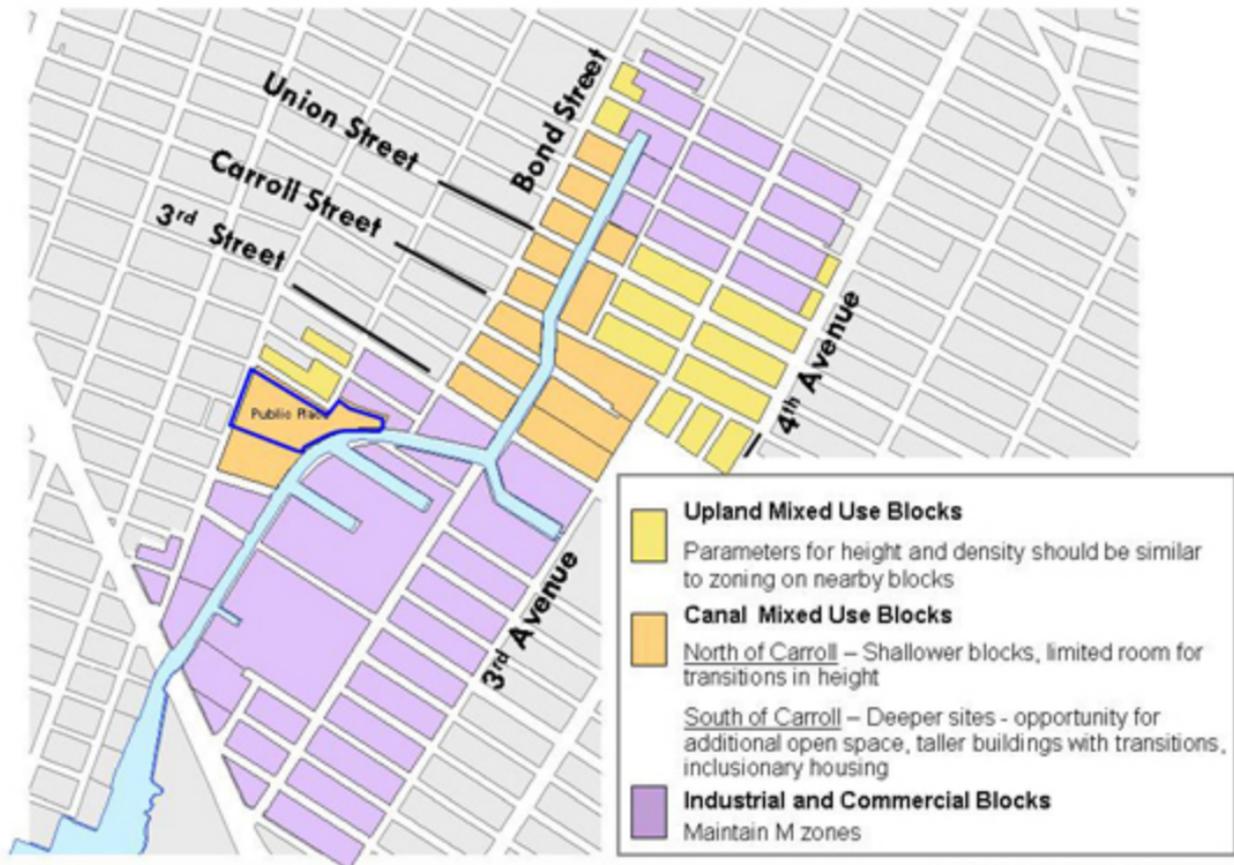


DEEPER BLOCKS SOUTH OF CARROLL ST





Mixed Use Blocks: Upland and Canal





Gowanus Canal Corridor Planning Framework

Guiding principles based on shared goals and an understanding of opportunities and challenges:

Land Use

Urban Design – density and height

Waterfront Access

Affordable Housing

Environmental Issues