

ESCR CAG Meeting -- October 26, 2023
(via Zoom)

CAG members present¹

Wendy Brawer Christine Datz-Romero Dov Goldman Richard Heitler Dianne Lake Michael Marino Robin Schatell
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DDC Presentation of Updates

Parker MacLure, Melissa Johnson Associates

[Link to slide deck for this presentation](#)

1. Quarterly hiring compliance update: Stephen of Bui Studio presents data as of August 31, 2023
 - a. Announcements
 - i. In-person info. session and job fair will be next week on 11/1/23 at Henry Street Settlement– collaboration with GOLES
 - ii. We’re also tabling in the community, including at Riis Houses to promote this event and provide other services
 - b. Hiring compliance update
 - i. Total PMCM2 staff (they oversee the project): 200
 1. *See slide 6 for breakdown of PMCM team by project area, MWBE subs, minorities, and sex*
 - ii. Total General Contractors’ staff: 1,683
 1. *See slide 7 for breakdown of GC team by project area, MWBE hires, minorities, and sex*
 - iii. MWBE Goals and Projected Utilization
 1. Hiring is projected to either meet or exceed goals. *See slide 8 for the specific figures.*
 - iv. Section 3 Hires
 1. PMCM: 6 new hires
 2. Project Area 1, GC: 0 new hires
 3. Project Area 2, GC: 1 new hire
 - v. Staff by Residency
 1. Majority live in Long Island, New Jersey, and other non-NYC locales. *See slide 9 for breakdown by borough and new hires.*
 - vi. Strategy and good faith efforts to meet goals. *See slide 10 for these efforts.*
 1. i. Ongoing efforts
 2. ii. City and Local Partners

¹ Some CAG members are likely missing from this attendance list which was inadvertently deleted after the meeting.

² Project Management/Construction Management

vii. M/WBE | Section 3 | Local hiring goals – See slide 11 for this.

Q & A

Wendy: How many of the new hires are from the neighborhood?

Stephen: Three hires are from the neighborhood – two local hires were from earlier in the project, and the last one was hired in October 2022

Wendy: Also, DCLA hired an outside artist for the art installation when it could have easily been someone from the neighborhood; that's a shame.

Dianne: Is the Sandy Recovery hiring goal just one part of Section 3?

Stephen: It's a separate goal from Section 3 for the ESCR project.

Dianne: Did we see the Sandy Recovery hiring numbers in the earlier slides that had the breakdowns?

Stephen: No, there were no specific numbers for that.

Dianne: I'll take that to mean that we're not at that 20% goal

Stephen: The priority for us has been on Section 3 and local hiring, but we haven't broken out the Sandy Recovery hires. If we hire in the Lower East Side, it's inclusive of Sandy goals, but we just haven't looked at those numbers specifically.

2. Overview of contracts

- a. Much of the information on slide 12 has not changed; the only new (and exciting) addition is that ball fields 1 and 2 are now under construction as of this month.

3. PA1 Construction Progress (*see slide 14 for locations of the activities below*)

- a. Esplanade removal activities along the waterfront. Deep sewer activities/pile install and park drainage work. Floodwall (Combi-wall) pre-drilling and installation. Fill material delivery by barge and placement onsite. Ballfields 1 and 2 under construction.
- b. Delancey Street - pile install then footing excavation.
- c. Construction for new Corlears Hook bridge.
- d. Passive lawn partial closure for utility work. PAIR Art Installation.
- e. Utility work around Montgomery Street & South Street. Begin floodwall construction in 2023.
- f. Montgomery St. – Cherry St. Greenway floodwall activities. ConEd asbestos abatement work.
- g. E. Houston Street test piles and future pile install. Pedestrian Detour Shift.
- h. Slip Ramps in use.
- i. E 10th Street utility work in preparation for deep sewer work.
- j. Ongoing partial FDR lane closures continue at various locations.

4. PA1 Construction work sequencing and rendering and photos

- a. Site elements and materials (roadway, sidewalks, parks elements) – construction of hardscapes around the ball fields has started
- b. Corlears Hook Bridge abutment construction
- c. Pedestrian detour at Houston Street and newly paved path near it (inside of the park)

5. PA1 - What We've Heard

- a. ESCR team scheduling site visit with DOT to review South Street/Montgomery Street intersection
 - b. East River Park drainage inquiry – Many catch basins will be located at low points throughout the park; they’re designed to collect stormwater that is not absorbed by permeable surface area—plantings, permeable pavers, green roofs—or runoff into the river. The grading plan directs stormwater to catch basins and the river.
6. PA1 - Future Park grading
- a. Pathways are all going to be ADA compliant, i.e., no greater than 5% slope (1 foot of elevation per 20 feet of distance)
 - b. Esplanade: changes in grade are generally more gradual than 5% and never exceed it
 - c. Hills: Off paths, elevation changes do not exceed 33% slope (1 foot of elevation per 3 feet of distance)
 - d. 3D-animated renderings: [Bike-through](#) and [fly-through](#) animations make the above easier to visualize (might be some slight differences in the final design, but it gives you a good sense of the park’s topography)
7. PA1 - Updated schedule (see slide 24) – As construction has been progressing, there have been alterations and changes in sequencing due to unforeseen field conditions or changes to the construction approach.
8. PA1 - October 2023 timeline – updated Gantt chart (see slide 25)

Q & A

Dov: I have more of a statement than a question. I live in East River Houses near where they’re doing work on Delancey and the service road. It’s getting dicey when we pull out of the parking lot; it’s become a blind spot where you can’t see who’s coming down Delancey. If something could be done, we’d appreciate it. Also, thank you for the Gantt chart with all that information; much appreciated. Please keep it for future meetings because it’s really useful.

Parker: I’ll take the issue with Delancey back to see if something can be done.

Dianne: Regarding the work being done for ballfields 1 and 2: does this mean the fill has completely settled down there?

Parker: Yes.

Dianne: At the walk-through we asked about the esplanade next to the ballfields, the paths around the ballfields, the status of amphitheater, the status of Fireboat House. Do you have updates on those? From what the contractor told us at the walks-through, the esplanade wouldn’t be open before the ballfield. Can we get clarification? Our concern is that a large chunk of the north end will be closed, but the only replaced amenity will be the ballfield, so pedestrians and dog walkers will lose amenities without them being replaced in the south end...

Parker: The contractor will turn over pathways and the esplanade as they’re ready and Parks is willing to accept them, but I’ll try and get more information.

Dianne: When they close things, they don’t close things in little bits; they close off big chunks of the park, so that would be good to know

Dianne: I have some questions about the rest of the fill. During the walk-through it was unclear how much additional time would be needed for the fill to settle in the area south of the bridge but north of the ballfields.

Parker: I think it will be by the end of the next year, but they're still evaluating how long it will take; I'll try to get more information.

Dianne: We were told that the topsoil to support the trees and the plantings would vary between 1 and 2 feet. We're concerned this won't be enough to support tree growth which is very important for shade. It would be great to have more information to understand this better.

Parker: I'll bring this back and get more detail about the soil.

Wendy: I heard the Dept. of Homeland Security won't allow the area under the Williamsburg Bridge to be elevated. How does this affect the storm "barrierness" of the other parts of the park that are elevated?

Parker: The flood protection under the bridge goes along the esplanade, which is why at that part the wall changes from a combi-wall to the interlocking cylindrical piles to make it stronger there. I don't know about the Dept of Homeland Security and their impact on that, but I can bring that back.

Wendy: So essentially, you're saying it's all about the esplanade

Parker: In other parts of the park, the combi wall runs along the esplanade as one barrier of protection, and then there's an underground flood wall. Due to the constraints of the bridge there, the bulkhead along the esplanade is the flood protection and supporting the esplanade.

Wendy: So, the area under the bridge will be several feet lower?

Parker: I can look back at the grading plan to get more information about how it's graded under the bridge, but you can see (on slide 15) that the floodwall and combi wall are the same height.

Wendy: Part of the reason I ask is because of East River Houses which has flooded before. Is that area more vulnerable because of this gap in the elevation?

Parker: There isn't a gap in the elevation of the flood protection from the river.

Wendy: Several months ago, on a walk-through I noticed lifesaving rings along the fence inside the work area but not along the esplanade north of the work area. I was told it was an OSHA thing to protect the workers. A young person died this weekend at 6th Street; could have been saved. Is there a possibility that we'll get lifesaving rings there?

Parker: That would be up to Parks to install those; we can bring this back to them.

Wendy: I was biking south of Montgomery Street and they're putting up a fence down the middle of the pedestrian pathway that separates the two bike lanes from South Street; it's in the middle of the pedestrian space whereas it could have easily have been moved 2-3 feet to give pedestrians access to that little island strip. Also, I've complained many times about the cars parking under the viaduct at Pier 36. It's public space full of tourists and locals who want to get to the water and walk for health. For health and safety reasons, can we adjust that fence and get the parked cars out of there?

Parker: The fence is for BMCR, not ESCR. I'll work with the BMCR team to respond to you on that.

9. PA2 - Construction Progress

- a. It's essentially the same information as of last month except that Gates 7 & 8 closer to the Con Ed facility are scheduled to be installed in early 2024 instead of this year.

- b. Stuy Cove Park
 - i. Greenway and park south of E. 20th St. scheduled to reopen late 2023 or early 2024.
 - ii. Greenway connecting to East River Park is managed by a NYC DOT project to fix sinkholes. Expected opening in 2024.
10. PA1 Air quality monitoring report – September update
- a. Number and frequency of alerts has gone down. Highest number is still near the Montgomery to Jackson Street area where the Pier 42 project and the FDR are in the same place.
 - i. Only two of the ESCR project-related alerts were more than ½ hour. Dust suppression techniques applied when it was determined to be on-site construction activities.
11. PA2 Air quality monitoring report – September update – preliminary data (just got the data from the contractor, and the PMCM team hasn't had a chance to go over it yet; will be updated and [posted to website](#) once it's finalized.)
12. Lead discovery, notification, and mitigation (this slide, 34, was shared with elected officials)
- a. Gives overview of process that we undertake when we find lead in soil
13. Parallel conveyance (PC)– construction progress
- a. Sewer test pits being started to locate the deep interceptor sewer
 - b. Water main upgrades and utility relocation

Q & A

Michael: I noticed there's a sign by the Corlears Hook NYC ferry station saying that it will be closed from October 30 to Nov. 3

Parker: That's not related to our work; it could be related to Pier 42. I would check with them and also ask the ferry.

Dianne: Regarding the esplanade slope particularly by the embayments, will I still be able to run along the water relatively at grade? Is that 6-foot elevation behind the seating and then if you go in front of the seating, it's pretty much on the same grade or vice-versa?

Parker: There is a change in elevation both in front of and behind the seating wall. It's slightly flatter behind the seating; there's more of the decline at the bottom of the embayment to get people closer to the water.

Robin: Gravel vs. sod/dirt. How are trees going to grow in gravel?

Parker: The soil depth varies based on what's on top of it. I'm going to try to get more information about the type and depth of soil for the different areas.

Christine: Considering it's October do you have a sense of when you'll present the design for the compost yard? It was promised toward the end of the year, and we only have two more CAG meetings left this year. Also, I'd love more info. on the status on the Fire Boat house and the area around it.

Parker: I don't have that update right now, but I'll reach out to DDC for them to provide an update.

Wendy: What's the percentage of turf vs. concrete vs. actual green in the park?

Parker: I'll bring that question back, too.

Christine: Just interjecting here: do you want to distinguish between real and artificial turf?

Wendy: I meant artificial turf like at Pier 42.

Parker: I'll bring that back.

CAG-only portion

Dianne: Where are we on the idea of meeting with electeds? Some of our concerns have been addressed, but we have new ones developing as this plan to open part of the southern section and close part of the northern section evolves. Also, I know there were question around local hiring.

Tara: I reached out to Damaris (she's not able to attend today) to see if things are progressing re: hiring and if things are moving in a more positive direction. Also, the communication around the scheduling hasn't been great, but today was promising. We should make sure they keep sharing the Gantt chart. So it's a question for the group: do you all want to resume our attempts to get a meeting with the electeds?

Dianne: It's important to hear back from GOLES. It's great that a joint hiring event has been scheduled, but let's see how successful that was because they're still not hiring people who live here. Around 75% of the people being hired are from outside NYC. Money's not going into the hands of local residents who need it. We should put a pin in this and go back and check on it.

Robin: It would be great to get some sort of a Town Hall; the community doesn't know what's going on and when things will reopen. The electeds and the community boards could be there.

Wendy: DOT study workshop #3 regarding a study about greening areas along the FDR was just held. Conceptual ideas for the west side of the drive were presented; only two CAG members there. They'll be doing another presentation for NYCHA members. I asked Kate Scher of DOT if CAG members could also be invited to that meeting. There might be a crosswalk across Houston all the way east, and there are other things that might be good for people who are invested to know about. I'm not sure if other people here are interested. I know it's not ESCR, but it's an ESCR commitment.

Dov: I would be interested; thank you.

Christine: After the walk-through you circulated an email and we started a shared document with notes and concerns. Most of them were brought up at this meeting. Did you formally send it to Desiree for answers?

Paula: We haven't done that yet, but we can.³

Wendy: Is there any way we can work out a meeting with the electeds?

Tara: We wanted a more complete picture from GOLES about hiring. After I talk to them, we'll figure it out.

Wendy: The temporary artwork at Corlears is getting removed November 15th. \$40,000 went to an outside artist to put asphalt on the edge of the river. It's very sad to me; they couldn't have found a local artist?

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 pm.

³ These questions have since been passed on to DDC.