Gowanus Neighborhood Plan
Status Update

Community Board 6 – Land Use Committee: October 22, 2020
Presentation Outline

» Introduction & Background

» How’d we get here?

» What are the next steps?

» Public Review

» Pre-Public Review meetings
Contours of Crisis

» Novel coronavirus has up-ended life as we knew it

» Attacks the most vulnerable **physically, socially, economically**
  » Essential workers who cannot work from home
  » Those who live in tight proximity
    » Crowded housing units
    » Large families – multi-generational households

» Underlying health conditions
  » Elderly
  » Diabetes, hypertension, immunocompromised, obesity

» Those dependent on institutions
  » Government, non-profit, faith-based services
  » Family help
  » Businesses

» Exploits and exacerbates racial injustices and inequities
How must we respond?

**FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS**

- Has the crisis changed underlying principles of city planning?
  - Equity, Inclusion, Urban Form, etc...

- Has the crisis changed the need for the Gowanus Plan?
  - Today, even more urgent
  - Highlighted desperate need for more housing, jobs, open space in high opportunity and healthy neighborhoods

- How has the crisis changed our engagement process?
  - Online meetings, forums
  - Broader, inclusive
Proposal at a Glance

» Over 8,000 **new homes** (3,000 affordable)
» **New jobs** across a variety of sectors
» 1.5-acre neighborhood **new park**
» **New waterfront** open spaces and **New streets**
» **New schools**
» **Support** for existing **businesses** to grow
» **Protection** for existing **tenants**
» **Improvements** to local parks and **NYCHA** communities
» Support major **transit improvements**
» **Vibrant and safer streets**
» A **resilient shoreline** and an expanded, **greener urban** canopy
» Support the **continued cleanup** of Canal and adjacent brownfields
Proposed Actions

Zoning Map Amendment
- Promote mixed-use growth in key areas
- Preserve and strengthen clusters of non-residential activity

Zoning Text Amendment
- Establish the Special Gowanus Mixed-Use District
- Create the Gowanus Waterfront Access Plan
- Apply Mandatory Affordable Housing (MIH)

City Map Changes
- New parkland and streets

Disposition Approval and Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP)
- Facilitate redevelopment on city-owned sites
Next Steps

SERIES OF PRE-CERTIFICATION MEETINGS

Gowanus Green Update
November 19

In December 2019, the Gowanus Green Development Team, HPD and DCP presented updates to the site plan. The Development and City Team will return to provide updates on proposed affordability levels, sustainability measures and remediation updates.

Infrastructure Update
December 2

In March 2019, DEP and DCP presented and answered questions related to stormwater and CSO management to the community. DCP and DEP will share updates to the Gowanus Plan related to stormwater along with updates on planning for transit and schools.

MIH and Affordability
TBD

In May 2019, HPD presented and answered questions on affordability. HPD will present information and a primer on Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Affordability in Community Board 6.
How’d we get here?
History

Industrial History

Citizens Gas Light Works (1920s)

Fulton Manufactured Gas Plant (1924)

Source: National Grid

Source: NYC DOITT
Scotto pushes for housing along the Canal in Gardens

By Anne Myrick

From: Donald H. Elliott

Seven members of your committee and I met with General Kelly and six other officials of the Corps of Engineers in Washington yesterday to try and convince them that the Corps should design the Gowanus Canal. Unfortunately I must report that the meeting was disappointing. The Corps does not believe that the economic benefits equal the cost. We argued that economic and environmental gains that they did not take into account would shift the balance. General Kelly did agree to review all his cost and benefit figures with us in detail and reevaluate their results if we could prove any of their estimates are in error.

However, even more discouraging was the judgment of the Corps of Engineers officials that even if we succeeded in proving the economic feasibility of the project and succeeded in getting the Congress to pass a bill authorizing the project, the President would refuse to permit the designing to be done. And further, we must agree if we did it will take many years before the Corps could take any action to actually clean up the Canal.

At a special meeting in June our Committee voted on a motion that found the MS-1 use inappropriate for the Gas site, and that any reuse should be consistent with the long range plans for the area after the Gowanus Canal is cleaned up. The decision as to the appropriate use was left to the Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate because the Committee was divided as to whether R-6 or M1 was the best interim use. At the special meeting, 9 of the 19 people present were in favor of rezoning the parcels to R-6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation (GCCDC) Plan</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>‘Platform’ for Responsible Development of the Gowanus Canal Area, NYC DCP Rezoning Study Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>NYC DEP Waterbody/Watershed Report, EPA designates Canal as a Superfund site</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>NYC DCP Rezoning Study put on hold, ‘Reconsidering Gowanus’ report released</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Gowanus Works: Preserving Place and Production (Pratt Institute)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Superstorm Sandy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Bridging Gowanus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>CB6 adopts Bridging Gowanus recommendations</td>
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</tbody>
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City Actions and Studies – 1990 Onwards
Background

Existing Land Uses & Zoning

- Originally, **naturally occurring live-work** community

- **Variety** of commercial uses in a diverse range of lot sizes, configurations and building typologies.

- Existing zoning largely in place **since 1961**

- Relatively **low densities**

- **Outdated** parking & loading requirements

- **Limited** range of uses permitted

- **No new residential** uses allowed

- **Disincentive** to remediate brownfields
The study area is well-served by public transit and connected to major corridors

Public transit access in project area or within one quarter of a mile:

- **Subway stations**
  - Atlantic Terminal transit Hub (9 lines/LIRR)
  - Union St (R)
  - 4th Ave and 9th St (R/F/G)
  - Carroll St (F)
  - Smith/9th St (F/G)

- **Bus lines**
  - B37, B57, B61, B63, and B103

- **Major corridors**
  - North/south: 4th Ave
  - East/west: Union St, 3rd St, and 9th St
Background

Flood Risk: Preliminary FIRMs

A portion of Gowanus is mapped within FEMA designated flood zone or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)

Base flood elevations (above grade) generally range anywhere from **1 to 6 feet**
October 29th 2012, Hurricane Sandy’s floodwaters reached an average of 3 feet above the level of the streets in Gowanus, up to 6 feet in the most vulnerable areas.

- Damage occurred in ground floors and basements in Gowanus
- Structural damage was minimal
- Flooding of basements predominantly present in non-conforming residential and mixed use buildings
- Businesses suffered from damage to stock and equipment on ground floors
Background

Median Household Income

Median household income is $115,300* 

Median income for Gowanus NYCHA is $39,568**
Background
Median Household Income

Median household income is $115,300*  

Median income for Gowanus NYCHA is $39,568**

In comparison, the median income of Brooklyn is $56,015 and of New York City is $60,762.

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS)  
*Census Tracts 71, 75, 77, 119, 121, 127, 129.01, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139 were aggregated to approximate the Gowanus Study Area;  **Census Tracts 71 and 127
Gowanus and surrounding neighborhoods are healthier and wealthier than other New York neighborhoods.

- Residents in CB6 are lowest rent burdened (29%)† in the city
- 57% are white compared to 32% city-wide
- Residents die prematurely at lower rates than other New Yorkers‡
- Nearly 71%* of residents have at least a college degree

Sources: *2014-2018 American Community Survey Census Tracts: 121, 137, 139, 133, 131, 135, 141, 77, 75, 127, 71, 39, 129.01, 119, 117; †2013-2017 ACS PUMA 4005; ‡2018 Community Health Profiles; §American Community Survey & NYU Furman Center
CB6 2000s downzonings (Carroll Gardens, Boerum Hill and Park Slope) limited access to opportunities including housing, schools and jobs

- D15 middle school student residential housing data by race reflects patterns of housing segregation in D15
- 2.5% of renters live in severely crowded housing
- Poverty rate was 12.3% in 2018; compared to 17.3% city-wide

Sources: *2014-2018 American Community Survey Census Tracts: 121, 137, 139, 133, 131, 135, 141, 77, 75, 127, 71, 39, 129.01, 119, 117; †2013-2017 ACS PUMA 4005; ‡2018 Community Health Profiles; §American Community Survey & NYU Furman Center; 2018 D15 Diversity Plan
Background

Why Act Now?

- City-wide **housing crisis** + a once thriving and **diversifying economy in crisis**

- Adjacent to built-up neighborhoods that have **strong access to public transit** and central employment areas, but with **limited room to grow**

- **Former industrial** waterway and surrounding area lacks critical infrastructure, and floods regularly

- Market **pressure** and development interest around Canal

- Infrastructure needed **to support growth**, which is typically ad hoc

- Encouraging greater density of jobs and housing near public transit **supports more a sustainable neighborhood**.
Public Engagement
Public Engagement

Update to CB 6 on study launch & process feedback
DEC 2016

Update and gather input on working group process from CB 6: JAN 2017

Gowanus EXPO Event
MAY 2017

Presentation to CB 6
JUNE 2017

Presentation to CB 6
NOV 2017

Presentation to CB 6
FEBRUARY 2019

Gowanus Green Update at CB 6
December 2019

BRIDGING GOWANUS

2014

Oct 2016: Study Kick-Off Meeting
Dec 2016: Resiliency and Sustainability Meeting
Feb 2017: Working Groups Kick-Off Meetings
Mar 2017: Land Use and Urban Design Charrette
Apr 2017: Plangowanus Public Platform Launched
July 2017: Working Group Summit
Oct 2017:

Community Resources Meeting

[Spring - Summer 2017]

Gowanus Framework
June 2018

Draft Zoning Proposal
Feb 2019

Scoping Meeting
April 2019

Public Review
We are here!

Working Groups
The Department of City Planning and relevant City agencies worked with residents and community stakeholders to develop specific recommendations that meet Study goals in five Working Groups. Above, each dot represents a working group meeting.

Topic-Based Meetings
- Sustainability and Resiliency
- Arts and Culture
- Housing
- Industry and Economic Dev.
- Public Realm

FEB MAR APR MAY JUN
Public Engagement

Public Meetings & Workshops

- October 2016 Kick-Off Meeting
- December 2016 Sustainability & Resiliency
- March 2017 Urban Design Workshop
- July 2017 Working Group Summit
- Gowanus Framework Open House
- Nov 2018 Gowanus Green Workshop

NYCHA & Targeted Outreach

plangowanus.com

CB 6 Meetings

Oct 2016 Onwards
Public Engagement

Working Groups

NYCHA & Targeted Outreach

plangowanus.com

CB 6 Meetings

March – July 2017

- 5 Groups / 5 Meetings – 80+ hours
- Developed mutually shared priorities and objectives. Discussed tradeoffs and challenges
- Used to share and archive Working Group information with the public
Public Engagement

- Public Meetings & Workshops
- Working Groups
- NYCHA & Targeted Outreach
- plangowanus.com
- CB 6 Meetings

Gowanus Houses – Tenant Association Meeting
Public Engagement

Public Meetings & Workshops

Working Groups

NYCHA & Targeted Outreach

plangowanus.com

CB 6 Meetings

Through 2016 – 2019

Community Roundtables and Pop-Up Events – Gowanus EXPO May 2017 Thomas Greene Playground
Public Engagement

- DCP pilot used during listen and learn phase
- Topic Pages
- Interactive tools to gather feedback / ideas
- >17,000 visitors providing over 250 comments
- Used to share and archive information with Working Groups

* April 2019 onwards – used as a study archive
Public Engagement

Public Meetings & Workshops

Working Groups

NYCHA & Targeted Outreach

plangowanus.com

Ongoing Outreach

CB6 Meetings

Draft Zoning Release – Feb 2019
Gowanus: A Framework for a Sustainable, Inclusive, Mixed-Use Neighborhood
What is the Framework?

- Released in June 2018

- Roadmap to achieving a shared vision
  - Requires collective action
  - All levels of society
    - Agencies, CBs, CBOs, developers, businesses, etc.

- Organized around priorities

- Check-in point with community on direction

- Provided a direction towards a detailed Zoning Proposal

- Alignment of city tools and resources

- Tool for evaluating existing and future projects or programs
Land Use and Urban Form

Industrial and Commercial
• Maintain for non-residential use only
• Increase density
• Rightsize parking and loading

Housing
• Allow for medium to high density housing
• Require permanently affordable housing through MIH

Waterfront Access
• Shape a unique, resilient waterfront open space

A True Mix of Uses
• Incentivize non-residential uses
• Create and enhance key corridors and nodes
• Activate the canal

Built Form
• Relate to neighbourhood context
• Allow for an architectural variety along the canal
• Maintain light and air to the future waterfront
• Promote resiliency and sustainability

*Canal sites subject to special waterfront bulk rules
Public Engagement

Throughout the engagement process we have also had multiple meetings with various stakeholders

- Wyckoff Gardens Tenant Association
- Gowanus Houses Tenant Association
- Warren Street Houses Tenant Association
- Arts Gowanus
- Avery Hall Investments
- Carroll Gardens Association
- Catholic Charities
- Con Edison
- Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC)
- Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus (FROGG)
- Friends of Thomas Greene Park
- Families United for Racial & Economic Equality (FUREE)
- Gowanus Alliance
- Gowanus by Design
- Gowanus EPA Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- Gowanus Canal Conservancy
- Gowanus Green
- Hudson Companies

- LIVWRK
- Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
- Monadnock
- Park Slope Civic Council and Forth on Fourth Avenue Committee (FOFA)
- Park Slope Neighbors
- Property Markets Group (PMG)
- BRT Powerhouse
- Riverkeeper
- Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC)
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- The Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club
- Two Trees
- The Old American Can Factory - XO Projects
Zoning Proposal

- Special District

- Industrial and Commercial
  - Upland Mixed Use

- Residential Areas
  - Enhanced Mixed Use

- Fourth Avenue
  - Canal Corridor

- Waterfront Access Plan
Land Use Outcomes

- **Promote mixed-use growth in key areas**
  - 8,000 new homes; 3,000 affordable

- **Preserve & strengthen industrial & commercial side streets**
  - 3,500 jobs across a variety of industries

- **Waterfront Access Plan**
  - 4 acres of esplanade & 1.5 acre park on Gowanus Green
Canal Corridor

Flexibility in built form

Transition to adjacent context

Keep the base of the buildings Low

Shift tower location away from canal

Limitations on tower footprint and form

Flexibility of street wall location along the canal

Tower location & width controls for light and air to streets, canal and courtyards

Proposed Envelopes:

- Crafted to support the urban design principles
- Respond to existing and proposed context
- Respond to specific site configurations
- Provide sufficient flexibility
- Work in harmony with proposed Waterfront Access Plan

For illustrative purposes only
Waterfront Access Plan

Public Access Elements: *Shore Public Walkway*

**Shore Public Walkways:**
Create a continuous path along the water
Proposed ULURP Actions

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WHAT IS ULURP?

ULURP

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEWS APPLICATION & CERTIFIES THAT IT IS COMPLETE & READY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

CERTIFICATION

COMMUNITY BOARDS

BOROUGH PRESIDENT

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

CITY COUNCIL

Public Review

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COMMUNITY BOARDS REVIEW APPLICATION & HOLD PUBLIC HEARING, ISSUE RECOMMENDATION (60 Days)

PROPOSAL LAW
Public Review

**WHAT IS ULURP?**

**ULURP**

**UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE**

- **PLANNING COMMISSION** reviews application & certifies that it is complete & ready for public review.
- **COMMUNITY BOARDS** review application & hold public hearing, issue recommendation (60 Days).
- **BOROUGH PRESIDENT** & **BOROUGH BOARD** review application, issue recommendation (30 Days).
- **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**
- **CITY COUNCIL**

**PROPOSAL**

**LAW**
Public Review

**WHAT IS ULURP?**

**ULURP**

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**CERTIFICATION**
- Planning Commission reviews application & certifies that it is complete & ready for public review

**COMMUNITY BOARDS**
- Community Boards review application & hold public hearing, issue recommendation (60 Days)

**BOROUGH PRESIDENT**
- Borough President reviews application, issue recommendation (30 Days)

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**
- City Planning Commission reviews application & hold public hearing, issue recommendation (60 Days)

**CITY COUNCIL**

PROPOSAL

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- **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION** review application & hold public hearing, issue recommendation (60 Days).
- **CITY COUNCIL** holds public hearing, votes to adopt/reject/modify proposal (50 Days).

**CERTIFICATION**

**COMMUNITY BOARDS**

**BOROUGH PRESIDENT**

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**CITY COUNCIL**
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