



Meeting Summary

Canarsie Planning Committee Meeting #5

Monday, September 22, 2014, 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Hebrew Educational Society, 9502 Seaview Ave Brooklyn, NY 11236

Attendance:

Emily James	Committee Co-Chair	Arana Hankin	Consultant Team
Harold Jones	Committee Co-Chair	Bill Calabrese	Consultant Team
Maria Gerrett	Committee Member	Kaye Matheny	Consultant Team
Lucina Clarke	Committee Member	Sam Saliba	Consultant Team
Yosef Serebryanski	Committee Member	Pippa Brashear	Consultant Team
Debbie Tiamfook	Committee Member	Marla Weinstein	Consultant Team
Molly Griffith	Committee Member	Kate Hayes	Consultant Team
Melba Brown	Committee Member	Silvia Vercher	Consultant Team
Chelsea Muller	NYS GOSR		
Chris Gorman	NYS GOSR		

Agenda Item: Introduction/Review List of Strategies

Presenter: **General discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- Rising to the Top
 - Competitive process for committees to be eligible for additional allocation
 - Categories are
 - Regional Approach (award amount: \$1.5 million)
 - Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations (award amount: \$1.0 million)
 - Use of Green Infrastructure (award amount: \$1.0 million)
 - Committee agrees that they intend to apply for one of these
- Process update
 - Initial list of projects will be sent to GOSR October 3rd
 - List is just a starting point, additions and subtractions from the list, as well as project development will occur
- Tonight's meeting focusing on:
 - Coastal Protection
 - Activation of Shoreline
 - Economic Development
- Lots to do before Public Engagement #3, where Committee will get public feedback on initiatives that will be developed
 - Initiatives will be grouped into:
 - Proposed projects
 - Featured projects
 - Additional Resiliency Recommendations
 - For example, a strategy of "reduce vulnerability to coastal flooding and sea level rise" could be represented in:
 - Projects
 - Comprehensive flood protection study

- Targeted flood protection intervention, e.g. living reef
 - Recommendations
 - Recommend that agencies incorporate flood protection strategies for Canarsie into existing plans (e.g., USACE reformulation study)
 - Recommend regional strategies for Jamaica Bay (e.g. surge barrier)
- Planning Team will guide the Committee through the categorization process at the right team, but will ultimately come down to a Committee vote
- The Committee should not be limited by the CDBG-DR allocation, initial project list should be representative of all of the ideas of the committee, which can then be prioritized
- Public Engagement #2 feedback
 - Meeting was very well attended, with over 100 participants
 - List of comprehensive feedback was previously sent to the Committee
 - Major topic ideas briefly reviewed, including:
 - Having an emergency relief center
 - Improve emergency communications
 - Increasing solar and access to generators
 - Improving street lights
 - Instituting living reefs along shorelines
 - Increased bus service
 - Safer pedestrian routes
 - Activation of Canarsie Pier
 - Increased commercial use
 - Increased accessibility
 - Fixing damage to structure
 - Programming and maintenance of trees
 - Creating housing programs
 - Funding through grants instead of loans
 - Technical assistance
 - Question about some of the comprehensive feedback, some of the ideas did not necessarily make sense to the Committee member
 - Clarification provided that the summaries were transcribed verbatim and provided so that Committee can see all feedback and be able to see how these ideas are reflected in the project ideas presented by the Planning Team
 - Strategies were voted on to get a rough sense of how the public is thinking about the strategies relative to each other, but this should not overly influence the Committee's project development
- Joint NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) meeting with the Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront Committee will be open to all committee members and is currently scheduled for Thursday October 2nd at a location TBD
 - Typically through the NY Rising process, the Planning Team has met with agencies and reported back to the committees
 - Due to the pressing concerns within these Communities around drainage issues, the Planning Team wanted to provide a more direct experience to work directly with DEP. Those who can make this meeting will report back to the full Committee at the next meeting

Summary of Discussion:

- Coastal Protection ideas here provided a framework so that the Committee can provide the engineering team a direction to study options more completely
- Focus has been on storm surge, but this is not the only risk that the Community faces
 - Event based hazards – hazards faced from isolated events (sudden erosion, wave force)
 - Gradual hazards – problems that arise over time (gradual erosion, sea level rise)
 - Question from a Committee member arises about the water table hazards and how these are categorized
 - Considered a part of sea level rise (gradual hazards), as all water is rising
 - Water table issues are more of a drainage question, and is already on the list of questions from the Committee for DEP
 - Gradual and event based hazards are risks both from 100 and 500 year flooding, but also from more frequent storms (10 and 50 year storms)
 - One potential approach is to recognize all of the existing planning going on, most importantly through the USACE reformulation study
 - Committee can put forth recommendations for USACE to study Canarsie specific initiatives
 - Surge barrier at the mouth of Jamaica Bay exists as a potential for a regional protection
 - Smaller-scaled interventions and cooperation around neighboring Bay Communities can also take place, such as sharing strategies with Bergen Beach across Paerdegat Basin
 - Point made by Committee member that in the long-run, cost of the projects, though high, may be smaller than the cost of repairs from damage
- Integrated flood protection strategy
 - Comprehensive protection in which interventions are connected to other interventions and to high ground to create wall of protection around the Community and the basins
 - What this protection looks like can take many forms, but will generally be tall, if protecting to the 100 or 500 year flood
 - Needs to consider include shoreline condition, the existing land uses, and the cost
 - Would require extensive coordination, limit the water activity and would impact environmental conditions
 - Strategies are always building to a particular storm, but no matter what protection takes place, there is always residual risk
- Canarsie-focused strategy
 - Slightly lower-cost comprehensive protection, in which interventions are connected to high ground, but do not protect the basins
 - Requires extensive coordination with private property owners
 - Limits water activity
 - Protection can still take many forms such as:
 - Levees
 - Berms
 - Can have co-benefits, such as placing a bike or other recreational access
 - Seawalls

- Deployable floodwalls
 - Can only be deployed prior to events
 - Flood insurance reduction has traditionally been used in riverine communities when these strategies have been employed. This is a separate process in which the flood map is altered
 - Still an unknown with regard to FEMA actually making these changes for coastal communities, but there has been a push for them to do so
- Shoreline opportunities exist and align with existing identified projects from USACE for ecosystem restoration that also offer lesser, but significant, levels of protection
 - Fresh Creek existing conditions
 - Shoreline is varied, hard and soft edges with access points
 - Ability to stabilize and provide access to the shoreline
 - Enhances activity along shoreline
 - Access points are limited
 - A lot of potential for in-water strategies offering low-level protection, with slight elevation increase, which is less intensive and would be less disruptive to water-based activities than a berm
 - Need to think about the areas where areas currently flood more day-to-day and addressing higher risk areas
 - Avenue K and 108th Street as one example
 - Other areas further inland where water flooding was surprising
 - Also important to remember Superstorm Sandy was not the worst storm to hit NYC and that storms are projected to increase in both intensity and frequency
- Question about approval for coastal protection strategies from the first round
 - Some of these proposals are moving forward with agencies, but implementation is ongoing for these projects
 - Smaller, green projects are actually easier to implement – cheaper and in alignment with other policies
- Community agrees smaller ideas are more in line with ability to access water and implement on a shorter time frame, focusing on ecological restoration opportunities with localized projects
- Question about the Rockaway Peninsula, recognizing that it is the front line of protection for the Bay
 - Protection on the Peninsula do seem to have impacts on flooding in the bay

Agenda Item: **Shoreline Access and Activity**

Presenter: **General discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- Regional scale
 - Opportunities to increase access and safety
 - Opportunities to create better connections from greenway into community and connect shoreline to the Pier
- At the scale of the Bay, there are a number of opportunities to tie into NPS strategies that have been identified in the Gateway Management Plan
 - Northside of Canarsie Pier can be more recreation focused, and southside more wild (with access), but still have oyster dock, wetland walk

- Traffic roundabout a safety and access hazard
- At the Pier scale ideas have begun to emerge from the public meeting tied to geographic locations along the area
 - Restoration strategies tie into existing plans, such as HRE-CRP plan that identifies Canarsie beach
 - NPS Gateway Management Plan goals tie into what we've heard from the Committee
- Shoreline access and safety
 - Improved pedestrian bicycle and safety
 - Committee feels it is important, because it is very difficult to cross, needs to be a focus of this strategy
 - Question about getting approval from NPS to do this work
 - Process involves iterations, Planning Team will go back to agencies and gauge the feasibility, in this case, NPS is already considering these ideas, making them more compelling
 - Round 1 of NYRCR featured many discussions with NPS, who were very open to Committee ideas
 - Question about how safe and clean is it to make a Canarsie beach that is swimmable?
 - Areas are fairly closely monitored as a part of DEP water quality concerns, but water access will have to be looked into
 - Access for pedestrians through the traffic roundabout is very difficult and needs addressing
 - Feeling that “forever wild” status makes Shoreline access a bit difficult on Fresh Creek, needs to be strategic and isolated, but doable
 - Committee agrees that word cloud presented is a good representation of their ideas
 - North/south break down is accurate
 - Programming at Canarsie Pier
 - Events in summertime, such as concerts and movie night
 - Used to have this (six year or so ago), and would like to see more of this
 - BBQ pits are fine, but not as much for kids to play on, they need more equipment
 - Major issue is that there is no real beach for Community to swim in and access, possibly in a way that filters the water
 - Potential to use the beach as a focal point of activation instead of the Pier?
 - Canarsie Pier already used by many vehicles
 - Pier has structural issues
 - Build another pier specifically for fishing?
 - Other ideas for Pier and shoreline
 - Educational components, could use the natural overlook on south end of Pier for these purposes, but also provide access along the wetlands, in a way that provides a better relationship from wetland to Pier
 - Disaster resilience center in an area near the Pier, some colleges have been looking at the Bay for researching purposes and might be able to use the space
 - Could bring younger students in, as well as environmental students, allow them to do research and think about these spaces
 - Question about the oyster projects and their benefits

- Wave attenuation benefits, ability to gauge water quality, and ability to offer educational tie in, similar to what has been done through NY Harbor School
- Educational tie-in to the walking paths, using a new building as a base. Very important for community to have an educational facility

Agenda Item: **Next Steps**

Presenter: **General discussion**

Summary of Discussion:

- Economic Development presentation to be tabled until next Committee meeting due to time constraints
 - Committee to look at these slides and think about potential economic development projects
- Co-chair reemphasized need for Committee to be engaged at this critical juncture in the process
 - Attendance policy exists and members will be contacted who have missed multiple meetings to ensure they are still committed to the process