



Meeting Summary

Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront Planning Committee (includes Bergen Beach, Marine Park, Mill Basin, Mill Island, Georgetown)

Wednesday, July 16th, 7pm to 9pm

Carmine Carro Community Center, 3000 Fillmore Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11229

Attendance: (Members, Planner, Firm Representatives, Invited Guests)

Joe Dai	Committee Co-Chair	Chelsea Muller	GOSR Regional Lead
Alicia Hamill	Committee Co-Chair	Chris Gorman	GOSR Community Planner
Jim Ivaliotis	Committee Member	Jamie Torres Springer	Planning Team
Tom Whitford	Committee Member	Jaclyn Sachs	Planning Team
Maria D'Alessandro	Committee Member	Evan Lacher	Planning Team
Fidel Del Valle	attendee	Sam Saliba	Planning Team
John Piccirillo	Committee Member	Jee Mee Kim	Planning Team
Robert Tracey	Committee Member		

Agenda Item: **Critical issues and visioning**

Presenter: **Jamie Torres Springer, Planning Team**

Summary of Discussion:

- GOSR announcements
 - Joe Dai and Alicia Hamill have agreed to serve as Committee Co-Chairs.
 - John Piccirillo and Maria D'Alessandro have volunteered to serve as an Outreach subcommittee.
- Recap of the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program schedule
 - We're following a 7-month schedule. We've already submitted the work plan, and this is the 2nd Committee meeting. Public Engagement Event #1 is scheduled for July 29.
 - We are working towards the first draft section deliverable, due on 8/1, and need to gather input on vision and needs at this meeting toward that deliverable.
- NYRCR program goals and components
 - Community Vision and needs feed into the Community Reconstruction Plan projects, which align with the six recovery functions.
- First draft section of the Community Reconstruction Plan is due on 8/1
 - This section contains the following parts: the geographic scope, storm damage, critical issues, Community vision, and relationship to regional plans.
 - We are focusing on vision and needs for this meeting.
- Review of Planning Area
 - The Planning Team moved the boundary in the Mill Basin neighborhood up to Avenue N in response to comments from the last meeting.
 - It is important for the Committee to confirm that the boundary is OK, as a lot of the analysis going forward will refer to this area.
- NYSDOS Risk Areas and Sandy inundation levels
 - We can tell from the Sandy map the relative intensity of flooding throughout the Community.
 - It is important, however, for the Committee and public to tell us more about the flooding, i.e., where it occurred, and how and where water entered.

- Critical issues
 - A major goal of this meeting is to gather information from the Committee on the critical issues in the community.
 - Planning Team reviews a few general issues that were mentioned at the first informal meeting, including: lingering flood damage and inability to pay for remediation; rising costs of flood insurance premiums; and sewer backflow. Planning Team asks the Committee if these are, in fact, critical issues for the Community.
 - Committee members comment that sewer backflow is, indeed, a major issue, which accounted for a large proportion of the damage in Bergen Beach, if not in Marine Park. Where flooding did not occur due to surge, it came up in the sewer through the manholes. Some Committee members got 4 feet of sewer water in the basement.
 - Committee members comment that the area is on a separate system, served by sewage treatment facilities in Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay, whereas there is a combined sewer system in Canarsie.
 - The facilities in Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay overloaded and were forced to shut down during Sandy.
 - Planning Team asks: is there sewer backup during regular rain events?
 - Committee members respond that yes, during heavy rain events there is backup, and sewage goes into Jamaica Bay.
 - What about direct flood inundation?
 - Committee members indicate that there was intense flooding in Bergen Beach, where water came up to East 73rd Street, between Avenues V and W and many basements were flooded. A Committee member from the area noted that he had to gut his basement after the storm.
 - In Marine Park, only a few blocks were flooded – due to sewer backup, not direct flood inundation.
 - In some areas of Mill Island and Mill Basin, residents lost everything.
 - There also was bad flooding along Gerritsen Ave. (which connects to Ave. U), which moved vehicles.
 - What was the impact to area parks, schools, libraries, and public transit (subways and buses)?
 - Some schools served as gathering locations.
 - Public transit was out of service, and it was hard to pump gas as well. Many gas stations lost power, and therefore did not operate. The Planning Team notes that some gas stations in NYC had generators, but did not have the gas to power them.
 - There were inconsistencies in power supply throughout the Planning Area.
 - A Committee member from Bergen Beach notes that he was without power for 28 days, though it was particular to his home and his neighbor's house. His in-laws, however, had power.
 - Committee members note that many people lost power for at least 3 days, and utility companies should have information on who lost power.
 - A Committee member notes that cell sites usually have ancillary power for 24 hours. When the Community lost power, after 24 hours, they also lost cell phone service – there was a signal, but it was difficult to make long calls. Another Committee member notes, however, that he was able to make many calls, so some still had service.
 - Did people gather in particular places?
 - St. Bernard's School opened up for their students.
 - People also went to Resurrection Church in Gerritsen Beach.
 - A Committee member from Bergen Beach notes that he was displaced and stayed with family members.

- In terms of hardened facilities to which community members may go in the event of an emergency, the Malone Center would be a good contender, except for the fact that it flooded. An option outside of the flood zone might be the Church of Saint Thomas Aquinas, which is outside the flood zone at Flatbush Avenue and Avenue N, almost in Flatlands. Another possibility might be the King's Plaza Shopping Center in Mill Basin.
 - What about the response from community organizations during Sandy?
 - There is a CERT team (from Gerritsen Beach, which also covers this area), which make up the only Level 3 responders.
 - Hatzolah also serves the area, but they were not involved in response, probably because there were not a lot of medical emergencies during Sandy.
 - Marine Park, which did not experience extensive flood damage, became a relief area in which friends and relatives from harder-hit areas, like on the Rockaways went to seek refuge.
 - No one was prepared for this – very important to have a place to assemble outside of the flood zone.
 - Evacuation centers
 - Committee members indicate that the designated evacuation center for the area is Brooklyn College, which is not convenient enough. James Madison High School would be more easily accessible.
 - Planning Team asks if Community members have spoken with OEM about this, to which the Committee responds no, but it would be good to.
 - Committee member notes that there is a City-run relief center, which opened in Gravesend. It was housed in a social security building during Sandy, so a good facility, and there was tremendous need, but no one knew about it and wasn't utilized.
 - In Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront, most help was delivered by neighbors, in the face of official resources mostly going out to the Rockaways.
 - What about impacts to local businesses?
 - Committee members comment that there is a vulnerable Key Food Supermarket along Avenue U, which backs up against the water. Bergen Beach had a strip mall that hasn't reopened since Sandy. There was damage to the Marine Park Golf Course. Met Food in Marine Park was without power.
 - There was sporadic power supply among businesses – some stores had power, others did not.
 - Committee member asks if the Planning Team can gather information on which businesses incurred damage and which did not.
 - Committee member requests that over this process, the Planning Team looks into where there are vulnerabilities with regards to power supply.
 - GOSR notes that it's possible to carry out a survey, and the Planning Team adds that we might also find out a lot of information from community members that come to Public Engagement Events.
- Community vision
 - Planning Team asks: what enables the community to bounce back or forward quickly?
 - Committee responds: a well-prepared, organized community – can't prevent everything, but can try to be as prepared as possible.
 - How can the Community be better prepared? – information, education, etc.?
 - There needs be confidence that a plan is in-place for help to arrive, and which designated places to go to in the event of an emergency. It is important to put a plan on paper, with action steps.
 - Tight-knit community, where people care and look after their neighbors.
 - A community that is prepared for climate change.
 - Resilient single-family housing.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Incorporate Committee feedback into boards for PE#1 and 8/1 deliverable	Planning Team	7/23 (boards review call) and 8/1

Agenda Item: **Community assets**

Presenter: **Sam Saliba, Planning Team**

- Planning Team reviews the methodology for mapping assets
 - Focus on what needs to be protected (key community assets that were damaged or are at risk of being damaged) → mapping key assets in high and extreme risk zones
 - Focus on what we have that enhances our resiliency (key community assets that are critical to preparedness, response, and recovery) → mapping critical health and social service / emergency response assets throughout the Planning Area

- Committee proposes adding the following commercial assets:
 - Avenue U as a commercial corridor
 - Georgetown Shopping Center
 - Lowe's and Home Depot (if not already in Shopping Center)
 - Aviator Sports Recreation Center on Flatbush Avenue
 - King's Plaza
 - Supermarkets – Key Foods, Waldbaums on Flatbush and Avenue U

- Committee proposes adding the following emergency response assets:
 - 24-hour CVS at Kings Highway and Nostrand Avenue
 - 24-hour Walgreens at Flatbush Avenue and Avenue S
 - Saint Columba Church
 - Brooklyn College (evacuation center, out of Planning Area)
 - Church of Saint Thomas Aquinas
 - Carmine Carro Community Center
 - Malone Center
 - Sunrise Senior Living Center
 - P.S. 236 on Avenue U
 - CERT headquarters in Flatlands
 - James Madison High School

- Committee proposes adding the following natural and cultural assets:
 - Historic Aircraft Restoration Project in Hangar B (next to NYPD Air Operations in Floyd Bennett Field)
 - Aviator Sports and Events Center (in Floyd Bennett Field)
 - U.S. Marines recruiting (Flatlands)

- Committee proposes adding the following infrastructure assets:
 - Substations, if we can find them
 - NYPD Air Operations
 - Change BQE to Belt Parkway

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Make proposed changes to asset maps	Planning Team	7/23 (boards review call)

Agenda Item: Public engagement approach for Public Engagement Event #1

Presenter: **Jamie Torres Springer, Planning Team**

- The Planning Team notes that this is the Committee’s meeting, so they should decide the format. We’ve learned that having stations works well.
- Inviting FEMA/Build it Back is also a possibility.
 - GOSR notes that case managers can be invited to address these issues and provide further information.
 - FEMA representatives sometimes provide more general information.
 - Committee proposes postponing having representatives from other agencies for a later meeting.
- Review of flyer for PE#1
 - Comment from Committee member that we should be emphasizing resiliency and infrastructure building, not “reconstruction.”
 - Committee approves Planning Team proposal to switch the placement of the lines “Come share your ideas for a resilient future” and “NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program.”
- GOSR will also be speaking at Civic Association meetings into the future to describe the NYRCR Program.
- Planning Team asks that Committee members come 30 min. before PE#1, at 6:30pm, to get familiar with the room layout and assignments.
- Planning Team proposes having a call with the Committee to review the boards, and proposes Wednesday, July 23, at 3pm, which Committee members approve.
- Planning Team has incorporated the feedback they heard from the Committee earlier in the meeting and come up with the following Community vision for Committee review: “Through the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program, the Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront community will increase preparedness around severe weather-related events and increased risks due to climate change through education, planning, infrastructure development, and leveraging the ties that bind the community together.”

Action Items	Person Responsible	Due Date
Finalize flyer and send to printer	Planning Team	7/17
Hold call to review boards with the Committee	Planning Team	7/23