

Harlem River BOA:

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

Strategic Sites Nomination: This Harlem River BOA Step 2 study nominates eight Strategic Sites for inclusion in the NYS BOA program. All nominated Strategic Sites are vacant or underutilized brownfield properties with the potential to be remediated and upgraded to higher functioning uses that benefit the local neighborhoods and the region.

Brownfield, Abandoned, and Vacant Sites: All eight nominated Strategic Sites meet the BOA definition of a brownfield. Wherever feasible, bioremediation techniques should be used as effective long-term, low-cost strategies for cleaning waterfront sites.

Transportation Systems and Strategic Connections: The Crucial Role of Access: Multi-modal access routes must be funded and built, particularly pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Full construction of the Harlem River Greenway, offering a continuous linear route for pedestrians and cyclists on or near the river, as well as navigable connections to the upland neighborhoods and to larger greenway systems, will unify and invigorate the Harlem River waterfront.

Other recommendations for improvements to pedestrian and bicycle safety key and for additional bus stops should also be prioritized.

Land Use and Zoning: The conclusion of the Step 2 BOA process is that there should be maximum public open space along the waterfront and that a district of waterfront parks along the Harlem River connected by a continuous greenway system is feasible.

Land Ownership: It is crucial to combine fragmented underutilized parcels to achieve the greatest public and ecological benefits from waterfront open space projects.

Parks and Open Space:

Priorities for parks and open space on the Harlem River include:

- revitalization of Roberto Clemente State Park and completion of its southern expansion
- remediation and construction of Regatta Park (already initiated by DPR)
- obtaining funding for the Harlem River Promenade concept (Depot Place)
- public acquisition of the CSX parcels in CD7 for ecologically-oriented park space and greenway connection, including a pedestrian bike bridge over the rail tracks,
- The more greenway continuity can be developed between nodes of parkland, the higher the use value will be for all users.

Recreational Boat Access: For community stakeholders, one of the highest programming priorities for the shoreline is the addition of boat access for small craft, ideally with a boathouse, but at the least, another boat launch area.

Sustainable and Resilient Design and Maintenance: Whether funded publicly or privately, all new parks and open space in the BOA study area should be both built and maintained according

to sustainable design principles as recommended in the High Performance Landscapes Guidelines (2010) by Design Trust for Public Space and NYCDPR and other recommended resources.

Natural Resources and Environmental Features: The two strategies that have the greatest potential for improving water quality in the Harlem River are: 1) clean-up of brownfields that may now be leaching contaminants into the river through groundwater and erosion sediments 2) deploying green infrastructure through the greenway, waterfront parks and open spaces, and streetscapes to cleanse contaminated runoff and avert combined sewage overflows into the river.

- **Education:** Opportunities abound for doing more environmental education programs on the Harlem River.
- **Air Quality:** The proposed addition of a greenway system would help advance air pollution-related public health goals set forth by the New York City Health Department, by providing much-needed infrastructure to enable pedestrians and cyclists to bike or walk through the area.
- **Resilient Design to Mitigate Flood Hazards:** Consideration of flood potential is an extremely important planning and design issue when considering new uses. Parks designed to withstand occasional flooding with minimal damage and to help manage storm surge are considered one of the best land uses for flood prone areas.

Buildings: For any new construction that may be built within the Study Area, buildings will need to comply not only with current standard zoning and construction codes but also with regulations specific to FEMA Flood Zones and NYC Hurricane Evacuation Zones.

Historic Assets: An interpretive and wayfinding program along the river and in conjunction with that of the High Bridge can tell the story of the ambitious 19th and 20th century engineering projects that shaped the Harlem River Valley and New York City's water supply system, as well as the Harlem River's history as a recreational boating destination.

For the waterfront BOA area to contribute to and benefit from the catalytic potential of the new \$60 million plus investment in the High Bridge, pedestrian and bike routes and signage connecting the High Bridge landing with the waterfront are needed.

Infrastructure: To drastically reduce water pollution into the Harlem River, the highest infrastructure priority is to integrate green infrastructure into the Harlem River Greenway and waterfront parks. The community's vision includes job training and employment opportunities for installation, care and maintenance of green infrastructure and open space.

The Tibbets Brook Daylighting Project is an exciting opportunity for a synergistic project that would be of great benefit both for water quality in the Harlem River and for a northern extension of the greenway system.