

NWBPCR Public Meeting #4 Questions Received

General Questions

1. Will this project raise taxes?

Response: No. The North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Project (NWBPCR) will be financed with bonds issued by BPCA. BPCA collects from its ground lease tenants PILOT (equivalent to NYC Real Estate Taxes, the rates and assessments of which are established by the City of New York) and contractual ground rent. From those amounts, BPCA funds its operating expenses and debt service, prior to remitting the balance of revenues to the City of New York. The project will not result in any increases to these existing financial payments on the part of BPC residents.

2. How will the schedule impact residents?

Response: The construction schedule and phasing plan for the project will be informed by the designs that are developed over the coming months, along with phasing objectives that will prioritize, among other things, the minimization of the extent of local community impacts at any given point in time. During the design phase of the project, there may be modest, scattered, and short-term closures of public spaces to accommodate necessary field investigations. Construction phasing and staging plans will be part of the ongoing dialogue with the community as design progresses throughout 2023 and into early 2024. Though construction will require partial and/or full closures of certain public spaces in Battery Park City for specific periods during construction, we will endeavor to limit these closures to the extent feasible and will communicate those impacts promptly and clearly, in advance, with Community Board 1.

3. How is this impacted by the latest report/recommendation from the Army Corps of Engineer and their choice of option 3B? Has the plan for the Battery Park City resiliency project considered the necessity of the project given the significant storm surge barriers planned by the US Army Corps? Has there been any coordination or integration of efforts among BPCA and US Army Corps concerning these two independent projects?

Response: The US Army Corps NY&NJ Harbors and Tributaries Study (HATS) is still ongoing. No design has been selected nor has funding been secured. In a November 2022 public presentation, the 3B option (\$35.6B and 14 years to construct) is expected to act in concert with existing flood barrier systems already constructed or in progress in Manhattan by the City of New York and BPCA, including NWBPCR. The BPCA projects would not be made redundant by this scenario and are, in fact, specifically contemplated by the 3B option.

4. Is it possible to see with a higher resolution and also a comparison of a current state vs. a future state?

Response: Yes, one of the first steps of the design process will be to further refine the graphic representations of what the flood barrier system could look like and how it may relate to the surrounding conditions. Additional visualizations will be shared as part of the public meetings that will be scheduled for first quarter 2023.

- 5. Have the environmental designers, engineers, architects, landscape designers consulted with professionals in other countries faced with similar waterfront challenges, such as Holland?**

Response: The design lead for this project, Arcadis, is a Dutch engineering company with extensive experience in water management projects in both the Netherlands and United States (and staff from the Netherlands will be engaged on this project moving forward). In addition, the design team is familiar with and will draw upon the experiences of and lessons learned from other similarly situated waterfront projects around the globe.

- 6. The lowest elevation is on West St side – how it will be addressed?**

Response: The NWBPCR Project, in combination with the South Battery Park City Resiliency Project, will create an effective systemic barrier to the potential flow of storm surge flood waters along West Street at the eastern edge of BPC, a phenomenon that occurred during Superstorm Sandy. The potential alignments of the project's flood barrier system (FBS) will cross West Street and tie into a high point in Tribeca. This will inhibit flooding of BPC from West Street.

- 7. How does this project address the impact of drainage rainfall?**

Response: The project will include measures to address flooding from rainfall events in addition to and/or in combination with storm surge events.

- 8. Where can we see details of the costs and how this work will be paid for? Where are details of the selection process for design and construction teams, advisors etc.? i.e. RFP submissions, scoring, disclosure of key individuals, conflicts of interest etc. Is federal funding considered and if not then why not please?**

Response: As the project has not yet been designed, cost detail is not yet available. After a preliminary design is formulated, a budget estimate will be developed. As noted above in response to Question 1, it is anticipated that the project will be financed by the Authority's issuance of bonds. Though the Authority certainly would be receptive to the possibility of viable alternative funding sources, applicable guidance related to the potential for award of federal funds for our resiliency projects suggests that the projects would be deemed ineligible for federal funding since, given that both a sufficient existing revenue stream and an existing finance structure exist to pay for the project, it would not be positioned to successfully compete for federal funding against projects for which funding alternatives are unavailable. Pursuing the project using the Authority's financing capabilities enables the work to move forward expeditiously, at no additional cost to residents and property owners of Battery Park City.

The selection of both the Progressive Design Build Joint Venture and the Consulting Engineer for the project were conducted through thorough, public solicitations and the selections were discussed at BPCA Board meetings in 2021 and 2022. Information about these solicitations is also available on the BPCA website.

9. How many trees will be removed?

Response: Minimizing tree impacts is a design goal for this project. Nevertheless, despite best intents and associated efforts, it is anticipated that a currently undefined number of existing trees will need to be removed to accommodate the construction of the project and its related components. In addition to tree impacts due to construction operations, equipment and installation, FEMA generally requires a permanent 15-foot distance between the new flood barrier system and any trees for operations and maintenance purposes. Thus, the number of trees impacted is dependent on both the alignment of the flood barrier system and the distance required by FEMA. The precise number of trees removed will come into greater focus as the alignment is refined. As developers and longstanding stewards of BPC's open spaces, the Authority will also seek to enhance BPC's green spaces by adding new trees and other native plantings wherever feasible.

10. How many BPC features will need to be removed?

Response: The intent of the design is to seamlessly integrate the project with BPC's existing landscape and design features to the greatest extent feasible. While alignment analysis thus far has revealed certain BPC design features that may be impacted by the project, it is not possible to discern in advance of the next steps of the design process exactly what features may need to be modified, relocated, removed or replaced. The potential need to modify, relocate, remove or replace any specific features will part of the ongoing design process and continuing dialogue with the community.

11. How many playgrounds will be removed or inaccessible for a number of years?

Response: The preliminary preferred alignment currently under consideration maintains all playgrounds in the final permanent condition. Temporary construction impacts will be determined as the project design and construction phasing is progressed.

12. Why is building an inland wall around Battery Park City the best approach to fight coastal flooding?

Response: The BPCA Resiliency Projects will not surround BPC with a wall. The resulting flood barrier system will be located adjacent to the waterfront in order to provide risk reduction against storm surge and rainfall events in accordance with current projections related to global climate change. The NWBPCR project will be part of a larger lower Manhattan effort to reduce the risk of coastal flooding (*see also: [Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency](#)*). The preliminary preferred alignment for NWBPCR was selected after receiving public feedback and considering multiple project requirements and constraints.

13. How do you determine the height of the barriers?

Response: The height of the barriers is also called the "Height of Intervention," which is the distance between an existing elevation and the height of the Design Flood Elevation ("DFE"), which is determined by the process described on this document. The criteria and process are consistent with those used for other Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency Project components. For more information about those processes please refer to this document:

<https://bpca.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/05180923/Coastal-Modeling-Paper-NWBPCR.pdf>

14. What are the “alignments” how do you define this term?

Response: An alignment is the physical path that the flood barrier system takes through the project area. It is most easily represented as a continuous line on a map.

The following General Questions were received during the Public Meeting:

- **The projects projected on the screen was much less clear than it is here, on the posterboards.**
- **Do not understand this to be able to comment on it. Need a lot more details and visuals**

Reach 1**1. How would this impact pedestrian use on N Moore St.?**

Response: Potential impacts, both permanent resulting from the project and temporary resulting from construction, to pedestrian use on North Moore Street will be evaluated as the design progresses. It should be noted that an alignment along North Moore Street would entail Heights of Intervention that would diminish significantly from west to east, finally blending with the existing topography at approximately Greenwich Street.

2. If the modeling will not allow for Reach 1B, could this be improved by putting the barrier between the bike path and the west side highway, rather than between the pedestrian and bike paths? That would provide an additional sound/pollution barrier for bikers and pedestrians, which would be an added benefit.

Response: The alignment and specific barrier location described in this question will be reviewed in the months ahead as an early design step.

3. Can you describe more how this would impact Washington Market, especially considering construction closure of green space along Battery Park? Where are parents and little kids supposed to go during construction?

Response: Specific impacts to Washington Market Park will be evaluated as part of the early design development process for potential alignments.

The following additional comments regarding Reach 1 were received during the Public Meeting and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- **I do not understand Reach 1 and need better visuals on this one and more to opine on it. I hear this from many in the community.**
- **The images are too low resolution to be legible. Please post hi res pdf. Thank you.**

Reach 2

The following comments regarding Reach 2 were received and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- **Need to understand if more opportunity for nature based approaches like oysters, marshes etc. Also last open house, made a comment about a floating pool + Would like to see this option with pros and cons and presented to community for feedback.**

- This pathway is commonly full with families and runners all summer. The wider pathway is important and necessary for the regular use of this space.
- Water access is a nice change. +1 for this option if the cost / work duration difference isn't significant.
- If the costs aren't prohibitive, seems worth the effort to expand this well used stretch including added natural elements, water interaction, and not mentioned above, but presumably either greater flood protection or lower flood wall requirements.
- Widened shared pathway and greater planting areas are worth the interagency coordination.
- Option 2B is preferable for several important reasons: actual access to the water for boating (not just seating by the water) and more options for greenery on a wider pathway.
- This is preferred if it's not cost prohibitive and doesn't significantly delay the overall project.

Reach 3

1. **Why does the newly renovated playground need to be rebuilt? Couldn't the wall pass behind it?**

Response: Based on public comments, the alignment in the area of the playground will be studied further as part of the initial design process to evaluate whether an alignment that does not require playground reconstruction is practicable. Regardless of the final alignment location, and in response to public comments, the design team is also studying the possibility of maintaining the playground at its existing elevation and not elevating it as previously considered.

2. **Also the site says that no tree can be within 15 feet of the barrier, does that mean that trees on North End would have to be removed?**

Response: North End Avenue is more than 15 feet away from the flood barrier system (FBS) in this area. Therefore, the trees along it will not be impacted by the construction of the FBS. Trees along River Terrace are closer to the FBS and are more likely to be impacted; however, at this point it is not clear how many trees, if any, will need to be removed.

3. **Are there ways to preserve the duck pond too? Would like to see options with pros/cons**

Response: It currently appears that retention of the Lily Pond in its current form and location will likely be incompatible with the ability to achieve: 1) a fully passive flood barrier system in this area; 2) universal access; and 3) avoidance of impacts to the Irish Hunger Memorial. The project team is developing design alternatives for a replacement water feature in this area, to be evaluated and determined during the design and public engagement process.

4. **The playground was only just reconstructed. Is there not an alignment that maintains this? What would the tradeoffs be?**

Response: See response to Reach 3, Question 1.

5. Can the trees be relocated rather than destroying them?

Response: The ability to successfully transplant a tree depends on a range of variables including, for example, tree age, size, health, location, and species. Where appropriate, the project team will study the feasibility of transplanting existing trees, and, if not possible, repurposing the removed materials as part of the project.

6. Why can't the playground, which was recently renovated and which the community waited so long for, be kept intact and open? Why can't the plan accommodate that?

Response: See response to Reach 3, Question 1. With regard to keeping the playground open; construction activities in the vicinity of the playground will require heavy machinery and equipment. In order to avoid any unnecessary risk and for the safety of residents and visitors, the playground will need to be temporarily closed while construction is taking place around it.

7. Can the trees to be impacted be clearly identified and details provided of what will happen to them, how the number of trees overall in the area can be maintained and what can be done to minimize loss of trees?

Response: See response to General Questions, Question 9 above.

The following comments regarding Reach 3 were received and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- **This might be a minimal impact design (and is far preferable than 3B), but it could still make room for new ways to think about resilience, and natural ways to adapt the park for inundation. There's opportunity with this design for the BPCA to lead and influence resilience design options elsewhere.**
- **This is the preferred option-leaves the park (and esplanade) largely open during construction and is less invasive overall. Also cheaper. Win-win-win.**
- **Absolutely not. This is the approach taken at Wagner Park that needs to be revised and is causing significant outcry. This was the approach at ESCR that also is causing significant outcry.**
- **This plan is horrible. BPC residents and their neighbors love their green space and want to preserve as much of it as we can. We want continuous access to green space, and everyone that just got booted out of Wagner Park is going to want to come here. You can't close all the green space downtown!**
- **This plan is terrible, it replaces grass with concrete, breaks up open green space which is so scarce south of Central Park. Please please please do not do this, it would destroy the gem that is Rockefeller Park and be a huge mistake and shame for whoever decided to do it.**
- **This is not preferred– disrupts the park both during construction and afterwards. Also more expensive.**
- **I listened to the September 19, Community Meeting, and the experts as well as the top executives of BPCA, didn't actually say how many feet higher Wagner Park will be after this intervention. They limited themselves to speak about the marina, facing Winter Garden, and there was no clear answer – if sea level goes up by 2-3 feet – what will happen to Battery Park City as other parts of the city are not doing anything to**

protect their communities from a raising sea. In few words, this redesign of Wagner Park is a waste of money. What we need is an overall city project building a protective structure – as the Dutch have done for their cities – at the very entrance to the harbor.

Reach 4

- 1. Could the ferry just be moved away from the shore, with longer pathways that can land passengers where there isn't construction, rather than fully relocated?**

Response: The potential temporary relocation options for the ferry terminal are still under review. However, note that the potential movement of the ferry terminal is restricted by the federal permit that defines its allowed location within a 700 foot by 200 foot area north of North Cove. Relocation of the terminal outside of that designated area will require Congressional action. In addition, the location of the ferry terminal is subject to ongoing operational coordination discussions with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and Brookfield.

- 2. Do not move the ferry terminal closer to the residential areas or the playground and do not close the playground – it was recently closed for so long. How was this potential work not considered when the decision was made to renovate the playground recently?**

Response: In response to public comments, the preliminary preferred alignment included in the scoping document identifies Alternative B, which moves the ferry terminal only temporarily, to allow for the replacement of the platform area the terminal is connected to. Please refer to Reach 3, Question 1 for the response related to the playground.

- 3. The speakers noted that a more southerly alignment of the ferry terminal (in its existing configuration) would negatively impact the comings and goings of the marina. Would an alternate configuration, one that eliminated South side docking stations at the terminal allow this?**

Response: As design and analysis continues, along with ongoing operational coordination discussions with PANYNJ and Brookfield, the team will evaluate if this option is possible.

- 4. How does moving the terminal improve access?**

Response: The area in front of the Irish Hunger Memorial could offer a wider space for queuing before a ferry ride and faster dispersal of ferry riders arriving in Battery Park City. That said, these potential improvements will be evaluated and weighed in relation to other potential adverse effects of moving the terminal. See response to Reach 4, Question 2 – the preliminary preferred alignment only temporarily relocates the ferry terminal as needed to install the flood protection.

The following comments regarding Reach 4 were received and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- Leave the playground alone. We endured it's closure long enough, now have lost Wagner, and you just want to keep closing essential facilities for families who live here. Please just leave the playground alone so we can play!**

- Do not move the ferry terminal closer to the residential areas or the playground and do not close the playground - it was recently closed for so long.
- Adding to say that you should leave the recently renovated playground alone! You just skip over all the details on what would happen, and how long it would be closed, but we've already waited a long time for it's renovation. It should remain as is, with continuous access.

Reach 5

1. Would option 5A obscure the views for diners at Liberty Bistro and PJ Clarks?

Response: The detailed coastal modeling required to determine the final floodwall elevations is in progress. The results of that work will inform the implications on views and other design considerations. As the primary objective of the project is to provide a defined level of risk reduction, wall heights that obstruct views will be necessary to some degree. However, defining what visual impacts are and evaluating any potential ways to minimize impacts to existing views will be an ongoing process during the initial design work of the project.

2. Would the sailing club maintain access?

Response: Though sailing club access, along with other Marina activities, likely would be limited or require relocation for some periods during the course of construction, the goal is to preserve the ability to accommodate access for the sailing school upon project completion.

3. Is an outboard alignment (5B) even a legitimate option?

Response: Option 5B would achieve the technical criteria associated with the resiliency objectives of the project while minimizing interventions within the plaza area. While the outboard alignment (5B) is carried in the DEIS Scoping Document, 5A is the current preliminary preferred alignment.

4. How can universal accessibility be improved in North Cove?

Response: Opportunities to achieve ADA compliance as well as improve universal access are being explored as part of the design process and are a priority for the team.

The following comments regarding Reach 5 were received and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- Agree with design team that this option is much preferred to a wall at the outside of the marina.
- The comment in the open house from the crowd was whether this was even really an alternative and that this reach needed a more legitimate alternative. This component of the presentation also elicited community outcry.

Reach 6

- 1. What do you mean by technical complexity? How is this a disadvantage? 6a appears from this brief description to be preferable to 6b for minimal impact. Please consult residences nearby for thoughts on the disruption to views.**

Response: In this instance, technical complexity refers to the need to build the flood defense system within a highly constrained space, given that the relieving platform (pier structure) supporting the Esplanade almost directly abuts the privacy walls for adjacent residential buildings. Any view disruption will be similar across all options currently being considered because they will likely have the same final flood barrier system height. The primary difference between the alternatives is that the least intrusive alternative attempts to preserve the relieving platform under Reach 6. This approach would minimize construction cost and time, and therefore seeks to minimize disruption to residents of the adjacent buildings.

- 2. Can you provide higher resolution pictures and include a comparison current state vs the future state, please also include elevations. Most of the buildings here have pretty high walls facing the esplanade - can you explain what will be different?**

Response: The detailed coastal modeling required to determine the final floodwall elevations is in progress. However, it is expected to be close to the current height of the privacy walls in the area. The finish of the flood barrier system itself will be determined during the design and engagement process.

- 3. How will existing views be impacted?**

Response: If the detailed coastal modeling determines the final floodwall elevations to be similar to the current privacy wall heights, the views should be similar in most areas. More substantial visual impacts are expected at street ends during periods of active storm preparation and deployment where flood gates will be necessary to provide a continuous line of defense.

- 4. Would it be possible to design the south esplanade open space to achieve more of a green footprint? This would bring it in line with the majority of the BPC areas that directly border the Hudson.**

Response: Yes. Increasing the green footprint of the South Esplanade will be explored as part of the design process. New planting design also will address climate change and resilience considerations, and, in keeping with the Authority's current practices, will prioritize native species to promote biodiversity and habitat opportunities.

The following comments regarding Reach 6 were received and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- 6a appears from this brief description to be preferable to 6b for minimal impact. Please consult residences nearby for thoughts on the disruption to views.**
- This is definitely preferred– minimal disruption, less cost and construction duration, etc. All attempts should be made to keep at least some continuous path open during construction.**
- Clear design principles of minimal disruption and preservation of mature trees.**

- **No, 6B is not a good option. We want minimal disruption and construction.**
- **Please ensure you get feedback from Jennifer Jones of Battery Park Montessori so you do not block all the windows for the kids in the school. I understand this is one of the more at risk areas because it was one of the first areas of fill and soil quality is low. It is why trees went down here in storms.**

Reach 7

1. Are there deployables or other ways to address Regatta views?

Response: The design team will analyze opportunities to minimize/mitigate impacts to first-floor views through design approaches and the potential use of deployable measures.

The following comments regarding Reach 7 were received and will be taken into account as the project design phase progresses:

- **This seems like the best option – having walls further out (which seems like the only other option) would disrupt flow along the paths, views for people walking/biking, access, etc. Would be nice if we could transition the lower planted areas to plants that can tolerate (or even benefit from) regular inundation.**