INTRODUCTION:
WHAT IS THE HAVEN PROJECT?

PROCESS:
HOW DID WE DEVELOP THE HAVEN PROJECT
WITH THE COMMUNITY?

EXISTING CONDITIONS:
WHAT ARE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

METHODS:
HOW DOES THE HAVEN PROJECT TACKLE
URBAN INEQUALITY IN A NEW WAY?

MASTER PLAN

DESIGN GOALS:
WHAT DOES THE HAVEN PROJECT PROPOSE?

IMPACTS:
HOW WE’LL CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL
OUTCOMES

MEASURING SUCCESS:
HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THE HAVEN PROJECT
IS SUCCESSFUL?

EVALUATION PLAN:
HOW WE’LL TRACK PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS:
HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

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The Haven Project is a transformative community plan to design, build and fund a new network of connected open spaces that will improve quality of life and deliver measurable benefits for South Bronx residents.

This new vision was designed with the community, health partners, researchers, and designers to promote physical activity, pedestrian safety, combat climate change, and increase social interaction in Mott Haven and Port Morris, a 1.3-square-mile community of 53,000+ residents saddled with some of the city’s heaviest industrial uses and suffering from high rates of poverty, diabetes, asthma and obesity. The plan examines each park, vacant lot, and right-of-way in Mott Haven and Port Morris and identifies opportunities to transform and beautify these spaces, making active lifestyle a deliberate part of everyday life. It will also support the Randall’s Island Connector, a New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) initiative to connect the South Bronx to Randall’s Island, with improved connections and wayfinding. NYRP is committed to implementing the full project with public and private funding.

Through partnerships with Bronx-based organizations like Montefiore Medical Center, the Haven Project will demonstrate connections between open space and quality of life that are well researched and often intuitive, but have never before been made explicit in a multi-year capital project such as this. For example, the Haven Project will use data collected by our partners to track how physical activity levels are affected by the creation of open space. Establishing such connections will continue to spur non-traditional open space partnerships and transform the way society values the space between buildings.

**Why is the Haven Project necessary?**

Public space is a platform for urban life. Parks, trees, pathways, and green infrastructure — or lack thereof — can have a profound effect on quality of life. Holistic urban landscape design has incredible potential to move the needle on factors such as population health, safety, and social capital. Residents who live in a neighborhood not designed to accommodate public life and physical activity are more vulnerable to chronic disease and crime, and this is exemplified in Mott Haven and Port Morris. For decades, residents of Mott Haven and Port Morris have not had access to their own waterfront — instead, they have faced heavy industrial uses, skyrocketing emergency room visits, and increasing rates of diet-related diseases. These underlying problems call for a cross-disciplinary approach that can be challenging for any single service provider to implement.

**Why is NYRP the right organization to launch the Haven Project?**

NYRP has been transforming open spaces in high-need communities since our founding by Bette Midler in 1995. We always knew that our work improved New York City one block at a time, and we suspected that the benefits went far beyond beautification. NYRP staff have witnessed our open spaces providing healthy food, inspiring volunteerism, performing ecosystem services, serving as venues for arts and fitness programs, and setting the stage for diverse community groups to come together. But it wasn’t until 2007, when we became the lead private partner on MillionTreesNYC, working with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to plant one million trees around the city, that we realized our potential to work citywide and across jurisdictions.

The power of that collaborative, citywide approach got us thinking — what would happen if we concentrated our efforts on improving open spaces in one specific neighborhood? What outcomes could we influence by using scientific evidence and community input to design a network of open spaces geared towards improving community health and well-being? These questions are the origin of the Haven Project. NYRP has long been bringing multiple stakeholders and decision-makers to the table for the cross-disciplinary approach needed to make the Haven Project a reality. We have the proven expertise to cultivate buy-in and understand what’s realistic and achievable, carrying projects from design and development through construction and programming, integrating community engagement at every step of the way.
NYRP has been working in the South Bronx for more than 15 years and has deep connections with local residents, community organizations, and city agencies active in the area. Building on multiple participatory planning processes, such as the NYCHA Choice Neighborhoods Project and the NYCEDC South Bronx Greenway, we worked with existing community advocacy groups like South Bronx Unite and THE POINT CDC to develop the Haven Project through an integrated community engagement process.

From October 2014 to March 2015, NYRP engaged local residents, activists, and non-profits from Mott Haven and Port Morris in a series of public meetings and visits to the South Bronx waterfront. The Haven Project expert team facilitated the meetings, and participants provided site-specific ideas and feedback. These engagements allowed the team to benefit from local knowledge and for community members to articulate their wants and needs.

Beyond describing priorities related to access to the waterfront, health, and local investment, community members provided specific and iterative feedback. We heard from residents and other stakeholders on street connectivity, existing social assets, and physical barriers, as well as reactions to design solutions.

When combined with research from the health and evaluation experts, this input provided a clear path forward for the project designers, informed by both academic research and community preferences. As the Haven Project moves forward, NYRP will continue to host community meetings and conduct outreach; the process is only just beginning.

The Haven Project is an ambitious plan and we’re going to need our government partners to make it a reality. We hosted a briefing for City and State agencies and elected officials in March 2015.

The Haven Project team brings together community members from Mott Haven and Port Morris with a team of advisors:

Andrew Burdick
AIA, LEED AP, Ennead Architects, Director, Ennead Lab
Dave Cable
Executive Director, TreesCharlotte
Lori Fingerhut
Research Assistant, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Mark Johnson
FASLA, President, Civitas
Mychal Johnson
Founding Member, South Bronx Unite
Laura Kurgan
MArch, Director, Columbia University Spatial Information Design Lab
Julia Lindgren
MArch, Project Coordinator, HealthxDesign
Paul Lipson
President, Barretto Bay Strategies
Gina Lovasi
PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Deborah Marton
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Jason Newsome
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Casey Peterson
Government Relations & Special Projects Manager, New York Restoration Project
Jacob Reidel
Ennead Architects, Ennead Lab
Rachael Riley
MPH, Senior Data Analyst, Montefiore Medical Center
Juan Francisco Saldarriaga
MArch, Research Scholar and Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning, Columbia University Spatial Information Design Lab
Rupal Sanghvi
MPH, Principal, HealthxDesign

BronxWorks is thrilled to work alongside New York Restoration Project to see the Haven Project plan become a reality for the residents of Mott Haven and Port Morris. Our community has for too long suffered the social and health consequences of living in a neighborhood without access to safe open space. We look forward to working together to build a stronger, healthier Bronx.

Eileen Torres, Executive Director, BronxWorks

The Mott Haven and Port Morris waterfront presents a complex ownership model. NYRP has already engaged many of the stakeholders in the area and will continue to do so as the Haven Project moves forward.

The Port Morris Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) and the South Bronx Significant Maritime and Industrial Area (SMA) stretch along the Mott Haven and Port Morris waterfront.
We are delighted to be a partner in the renewal of this corner of the South Bronx, an area so close to the East River and which has so many possibilities to offer its families.

Evelyn Hey, South Bronx Charter School for International Cultures & the Arts

This map consolidating community feedback helped the project designers identify problem areas and design opportunities in the neighborhood.

NYRP cast a wide net to make sure everyone who cares about Mott Haven and Port Morris could help establish priorities. We could not have created this proposal without the participation of every institution and individual noted here, and we are grateful.
No other New York City neighborhood, and perhaps no neighborhood in the nation, presents the unique combination of challenges and opportunities as Mott Haven and Port Morris. The neighborhood’s potential to provide safe and beautiful open spaces that would unlock health benefits for the community’s 53,000 residents has been unrealized for decades. A serious upgrade to the built environment could result in significant improvements in health and well-being for these residents, who suffer from some of the poorest health outcomes in the United States.

**Challenge 1: Limited, under-resourced parks and open spaces**

Parks and open space provide spaces to recreate, relax, and restore the mind. According to New Yorkers for Parks, Mott Haven has open space rates well below the organization’s standard — 0.32 acres of active open space per 1,000 residents versus the standard of 1.0 acre, and 0.80 acres of passive open space compared to the 1.5 acre standard. Only 50% of residents are within a 10-minute walk of a large park, and 68% are within a five-minute walk of a small park or playground, compared to the 100% standard for both metrics. It’s worth noting that if Port Morris were included in this survey, the results would be significantly worse on all counts. Many of the parks in Mott Haven, including 35-acre St. Mary’s Park, are in dire need of capital upgrades, while other pocket parks are almost entirely asphalt.

**Challenge 2: Lack of waterfront access**

Within Mott Haven and Port Morris, there is not one public waterfront access point. Derelict waterfront sites, like the street-end on East 132nd Street, hamper stunning views. In an age when New York City is reclaiming its waterfront — evidenced by the recent creation and transformation of waterfront parks in all five boroughs, efforts to increase coastal resilience such as the Rebuild by Design competition, and Mayor de Blasio’s call for a dramatic expansion of ferry service — it is truly an equity issue that the Mott Haven and Port Morris waterfront remains privatized and fallow.

**Challenge 3: Monumental highway and industrial infrastructure**

Possibly the greatest barrier to leading an active lifestyle in Mott Haven and Port Morris is the monumental scale of highway infrastructure and industry in the neighborhood. Like many low-income neighborhoods in New York City, Mott Haven and Port Morris were victim to massive highway projects undertaken by the mid-20th century city planner Robert Moses. To this day, these roads — the Major Deegan Expressway, Bruckner Expressway, and the entrance to the Robert F. Kennedy (Triborough) Bridge — bring thousands of vehicles and their pollution through the community on a daily basis.

The highways isolate Mott Haven and Port Morris from one another, are visually unappealing, create underpasses people perceive as unsafe, and foster dangerous pedestrian and bike conditions. At East 138th Street, getting from Mott Haven to Port Morris requires crossing 13 lanes of traffic under the Bruckner Expressway. Pedestrian injuries in the South Bronx cause 114 emergency room visits and 32 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents annually, compared to 111 and 26 citywide.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS: WHAT ARE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?**

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Playground 134 is an irregularly shaped park adjacent to the on-ramp to the Robert F. Kennedy (Triborough) Bridge and is therefore difficult to access and enjoy.

This map represents green space — defined as grass and trees — in New York City.

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**Improvements to the built environment and the social activities that they attract, are among the most effective crime prevention and community safety strategies we have available to us today.**

Elizabeth Glazer, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice

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Barretto Point Park is just one gem in the crown of the South Bronx Greenway, which successfully marries industry and recreation. Image credit: NYC Department of Parks & Recreation.
The street end pier on East 132nd Street in Port Morris has not been fortified after an explosion in the 1980s. Regardless, people are often seen fishing and recreating on the pier.

For too long, the Bronx has been ignored and left behind by those who run this city. The Bronx is our best example, of a tale of two cities, long forgotten. This community needs the South Bronx waterfront to be developed now. We want our waterfront, so we can be healthy and rid ourselves of the highest asthma rate in the nation, and all the other illnesses that plague the Bronx. We want housing, jobs, clean air, healthy children a community that runs and walks with its animal friends, healthy foods, the opportunity to exercise, and the chance to feel like WE are a part of the rest of NYC!

Carmen Santiago, Resident

NYRP’s advocacy for an open space network is important for creating safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the Connector and improving neighborhood walkability in Port Morris and Mott Haven. NYC Parks looks forward to continuing its efforts with NYRP, NYCDOT, RIPA, and the community to improve open space access for enhanced neighborhood health.

Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
The Haven Project: Existing Conditions

Challenge 4: Vulnerable local population

Located within the poorest congressional district in the United States, Mott Haven and Port Morris residents face significant social barriers. According to the American Community Survey 2013 five-year estimates, 45% of residents live below the poverty level, and 44% of adults did not graduate high school. There is a large immigrant community, with one in four residents born outside the United States. The young and elderly population is large, with 31% of the population under age 18 and 9% over age 65.

Challenge 5: Poor environmental health outcomes

Of New York City’s 42 neighborhoods, the South Bronx ranked second to last in avoidable hospitalization rates. Many of the health issues that plague this neighborhood are due to the poor environmental conditions. Asthma rates in the South Bronx are 50% higher than New York City as a whole. Thirty-four percent of adults have not participated in any exercise in the past 30 days compared to 25% citywide, and 71% of adults are overweight or obese compared to 57% citywide.

Opportunity 1: Strong coalition of community-based organizations, activists, and concerned citizens

Community engagement is a pillar of the Haven Project. Through NYRP’s longtime work in the South Bronx and our outreach for this project, we’ve come to know many community-based organizations, activists, and concerned citizens who have been advocating for public space, waterfront access, and public health in their community for decades. Advocacy groups such as South Bronx Unite, Friends of Brook Park, and the Harlem River Working Group are long-time advocates for waterfront access in their community. The Haven Project was informed by South Bronx Unite’s pioneering Mott Haven–Port Morris Waterfront Plan, which calls for transforming several waterfront sites into open space and creating a continuous ribbon of greenway. This plan was recently granted priority status in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Open Space Plan. Neighboring Hunts Point is moving ahead with its Hunts Point Lifelines plan, a winning submission to the Rebuild by Design competition by PennDesign/OLIN. As Lifelines moves forward, the Haven Project can leverage its design thinking and investment and even pilot resilience strategies in Mott Haven and Port Morris. In every way, the Haven Project builds off of these pre-existing efforts.

Opportunity 2: Vibrant cultural history

The rich cultural history of Mott Haven and Port Morris, recognized as the birthplace of hip-hop, is readily apparent walking through the neighborhood. Today, the community is dotted with Hispanic restaurants, bodegas, artist studios, non-profits, public housing, cultural organizations, and light and heavy industry. The two designated historic districts — Mott Haven and Mott Haven East — are some of the oldest settled areas in the Bronx and are home to beautiful rows of brownstones, the Mott Haven Branch of the New York Public Library, and St. Jerome’s Roman Catholic Church. Mott Haven’s eight community gardens, including NYRP’s own Willis Avenue Community Garden, provide space to grow fresh produce, host community gatherings and public programs, and provide respite from the urban environment.

Opportunity 3: Ongoing investment in capital projects and programs

Slowly but surely, the South Bronx is seeing more investment in capital projects and programs. A large portion of southern Mott Haven was rezoned in 2004 to allow for more mixed-used development. New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) recently applied for a large grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Choice Neighborhoods program to renovate several NYCHA properties in Mott Haven and strengthen educational and youth programming.
The Haven Project arises from the conviction that everything begins with the land. Every aspect of our urban lives—from education to employment to mental and physical health to economic success—also repurposing the tools of public health and urban planning to explicitly link neighborhood development efforts to demonstrated community impacts that flow from a better environment.

The built environment is critical for advancing community development, especially as a social determinant of health; however, methodologies for optimizing the design decisions that shape those environments are seldom systematically applied. In the Haven Project, design of the public realm is treated as a community-based intervention, subject to rigorous standards of performance at the neighborhood population-level. The building model is critical for advancing community development, especially as a social determinant of health; however, methodologies for optimizing the design decisions that shape those environments are seldom systematically applied. In the Haven Project, design of the public realm is treated as a community-based intervention, subject to rigorous standards of performance at the neighborhood population-level.

Our work involves deploying best-practice approaches to placemaking, such as creating safer intersections, installing streetscape amenities like street trees and benches, and transforming urban spaces for the community. Beyond best practices, however, the project is unique in its focus on optimizing design decision-making, using a collective impact model to consider design moves against performance tradeoffs. Design decisions are based on community input and priorities, indicators of place-based inequity, spatial needs assessment, and studies linking key design elements and thresholds for change.

A pathways for change approach was applied to develop an impact framework. This framework models how design strategies and related urban features will activate and optimize factors that subsequently defines measures and timeline for demonstrating progress against outcomes and contributing to population impact.

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OVER TIME, PORT MORRIS CAN TRANSFORM INTO A RESILIENT COASTAL COMMUNITY THAT SUCCESSFULLY MARRIES INDUSTRIAL, RESIDENTIAL, AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS.
THE HAVEN PROJECT PROPOSES DESIGN DECISIONS BASED ON RESEARCH. FOR EXAMPLE, AIR QUALITY IN THE SOUTH BRONX IS BETTER ALONG THE WATERFRONT, WHERE WIND DISPERSES POLLUTANTS HARMFUL TO HUMAN HEALTH. THEREFORE, THE PLAN PROPOSES A SERIES OF WATERFRONT PARKS.
GOOD SIDEWALK CONDITIONS AND PROXIMITY TO TRAILS MAY LEAD TO MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND A HEALTHIER BODY MASS INDEX. THE HAVEN PROJECT PROPOSES CONTINUOUS AND ENJOYABLE ROUTES FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS.
FEELING VULNERABLE TO TRAFFIC INJURY DISCOURAGES WALKING, RUNNING, BIKING, AND OUTSIDE PLAY FOR CHILDREN.19, 20, 21 STREET AND INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN THAT REDUCES TRAFFIC AND IDLING DECREASES POLLUTANT LEVELS IN THE AIR.22 MAKING STREETS SAFER AND MORE EFFICIENT CAN HAVE A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON COMMUNITY HEALTH.
Over the next several years, NYRP will transform open spaces in Mott Haven and Port Morris in multiple phases, with each phase contributing to the overarching goal of improving quality of life for residents by addressing community priorities and persistent place-based inequity. Our work and the work we catalyze through partnerships with city agencies and other stakeholders will allow residents of NYCHA’s Mill Brook or Betances Houses to enjoy a walk to a waterfront park in their community — a seemingly simple accomplishment, but one that has been unrealized for generations.

As a first phase of work, the Haven Project will focus on enhancing connectivity to the southeast corner of Port Morris and establishing waterfront parks at 132nd and 134th Streets. The planning strategies to achieve these goals are backed by research and community support. The next several pages explain why the project will focus first on the southeastern district and how the long-term vision as a whole will maximize impact for residents of Mott Haven and Port Morris.

Mott Haven’s residents lack sufficient open space acres for active and passive recreation — our Mott Haven Open Space Index found that there is less than half the amount of open space acres in the neighborhood than needed. The Haven Project has the potential to change that by providing new open spaces and by strengthening connections to places like Randall’s Island, where all New Yorkers can relax and recreate.

Tupper Thomas, Executive Director, New Yorkers for Parks
### Linkage Design Goals

#### Strategies
- Street Connectivity/Pedestrian + Bicycle Friendly Paths
- Social Interaction
- Traffic Calming
- Visibility/Lighting
- Local Tourism
- Organized Spatial System

#### Short-Term Outcomes
- Active Transport/Physical Activity
- People Presence
- Social Connectedness/Socialization
- Road Safety

#### Medium Term Outcomes
- Decreased Diabetes Rate (adults)
- Lower BMI/Weight Loss (adults)
- Chronic Stress
- Mood
- Perceived Safety
- Lower Crime
- Increased Local Purchasing
- Social Cohesion
- Traffic Related Accidents
- Increased Neighborhood Investment

#### Impacts
- Obesity Related Illness/Premature Death
- Cardiovascular Health
- Mental Health
- Bone Health (Children)
- Muscular Fitness
- Stress Related Illness
- Local Economic Investment
- Neighborhood Safety
- Social Capital

### 1: Link neighborhood nodes

Creating safe and welcoming corridors to connect residents across physical and perceived barriers is paramount for the Haven Project. Right now, the streets of Mott Haven and Port Morris aren’t optimized for anyone. Residents expressed concern over the lack of connectivity within their neighborhood for pedestrians and cyclists, especially below high-way infrastructure. Not surprisingly, these perceptions by the community are backed up by research which suggests that safe street conditions are associated with increased walking, running, biking, and outside play for children. Perception of safety can be just as important as actual physical safety in terms of getting people to walk in their own neighborhood. Importantly, perception of safety is a greater predictor than actual safety for social connection and stress. Disorder of the streetscape, including derelict and vacant lots, increases stress and anxiety and affects social connection, especially related to trust.

The NYC DOT is excited that New York Restoration Project is advocating for better access to Mott Haven. The NYC DOT has been working hard on the South Bronx and Bronx River Greenways, and the new at grade crossing from the Bronx to Randall’s Island. NYC DOT’s work in conjunction with NYRP will strengthen industry by allowing more people to safely walk and bike to the important industrial jobs in the South Bronx. As parks are developed, we will continue to expand access in the safest means possible, developing safe bicycle and pedestrian corridors that accommodate truck movements. The much anticipated opening of the Randall’s Island Connector is a key link in the development of the South Bronx Greenway. The new bridge will draw Bronx residents from the upland communities to the waterfront. NYC DOT is committed to working with NYRP to explore possible network improvements that would facilitate safer more efficient travel for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles.

Ted Wright, NYC DOT Director, Greenways
**Access Design Goals**

**Strategies**
- Social Interaction
- Visibility/Lighting
- Proximity To Large Park/Open Space
- Connections To Nature/Green Space
- Recreation/Play
- Deposition Surface
- Maintenance

**Short-Term Outcomes**
- Active Transport/Physical Activity
- People Presence
- Social Connectedness/Socialization
- Ecological Awareness
- Stress Recovery
- Civic Engagement
- Cultural Preservation/Expression

**Medium Term Outcomes**
- Decreased Diabetes Rate (adults)
- Lower BMI/Weight Loss (adults)
- Chronic Stress
- Mood
- Perceived Safety
- Lower Crime
- Increased Local Purchasing
- Social Cohesion
- Air Quality
- Increased Neighborhood Investment
- Civic Engagement

**Impacts**
- Obesity Related Illness/Premature Death
- Cardiovascular Health
- Mental Health
- Local Economic Investment
- Neighborhood Safety
- Social Capital
- Respiratory Health
- Stewardship

**Waterfront Design Goals**

**Strategies**
- Street Connectivity/ Pedestrian + Bicycle Friendly Paths
- Social Interaction
- Tree Canopy/Density
- Visibility/Lighting
- Connections To Nature/Green Space
- Habitat Restoration
- Stormwater/Green Infrastructure
- Maintenance

**Short-Term Outcomes**
- Active Transport/Physical Activity
- People Presence
- Social Connectedness/Socialization
- Biodiversity
- Microclimate
- Ecological Awareness
- Stress Recovery
- Stormwater Management
- Lower Crime

**Medium Term Outcomes**
- Decreased Diabetes Rate (adults)
- Lower BMI/Weight Loss (adults)
- Chronic Stress
- Mood
- Perceived Safety
- Lower Crime
- Increased Local Purchasing
- Social Cohesion
- Air Quality
- Increased Neighborhood Investment
- Civic Engagement

**Impacts**
- Obesity Related Illness/Premature Death
- Cardiovascular Health
- Mental Health
- Bone Health (children)
- Muscular Fitness
- Local Economic Investment
- Neighborhood Safety
- Social Capital
- Ecosystem Health
- Infectious Disease
- Energy Use
- Respiratory Health
- Stewardship
- Water Quality

**2: Provide access to large open spaces**

Large parks offer opportunities for recreation, exercise, and fresh air that are not achievable elsewhere in the city. Large parks in New York City (defined as six acres or more) are linked to lower body mass index (BMI) at a population level, whereas the relationship is not consistent for small parks. Randall’s Island Park offers more than 250 acres of parkland and recreation facilities, and now that the NYCEDC is completing the Randall’s Island Connector, a pedestrian and bicycle bridge linking Port Morris and Randall’s Island, a focus of the Haven Project will be to get people safely to this newly accessible large open space.

**3: Create a waterfront trail**

NYRP will focus on creating new open spaces along the waterfront, leveraging their proximity to the Randall’s Island Connector, and vice versa, to create a real destination for the neighborhood. Mott Haven and Port Morris residents’ desire to recreate on their own waterfront is among the highest in the city. With not one public waterfront access point in the neighborhood, the creation of a waterfront park is a guaranteed success in the community.

Locating open spaces away from highway infrastructure and on the waterfront, where wind dispersion is highest, will also enable visitors to experience better air quality. Since physical activity requires deeper breathing, good air quality is especially pertinent for recreation.

This has always been a strong community through both good times and difficult times. The efforts of the New York Restoration Project will add to the beauty of this growing neighborhood.

Tony Riccio, Board Chair, SoBro
**Placemaking Design Goals**

**Strategies**
- Community Engagement
- Interactivity
- Cultural Appropriateness/Identity

**Short-Term Outcomes**
- Social Connectedness/Socialization
- Ecological Awareness
- Civic Engagement
- Cultural Preservation/Expression

**Medium Term Outcomes**
- Civic Engagement
- Political Mobilization
- Stewardship

**Impacts**
- Social Capital
- Stewardship

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**4: Integrate creative, interactive placemaking**

One of the strongest correlations found in our research is between community engagement and park use. In one particular study, regular physical activity increased from 14% to 59% in a group of individuals heavily engaged in the creation of a new park. By aligning our efforts with current community interests and articulating the history and identity of the community, we will ensure active use of new open spaces.

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**Resilience Design Goals**

**Strategies**
- Habitat Restoration
- Stormwater/Green Infrastructure
- Storm Surge Protection

**Short-Term Outcomes**
- Biodiversity
- Stormwater Management
- Storm Surge Hazard Mitigation

**Medium Term Outcomes**
- Reduction in Sewer Overflow Mitigate Job Loss

**Impacts**
- Ecosystem Health
- Water Quality
- Landscape Resilience
- Employment

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**5: Support a resilient shoreline**

Superstorm Sandy, despite its horrors, presented a case study in resilient design: Brooklyn Bridge Park, designed to withstand storm surges, suffered minimal damage and provides a model for other waterfront parks citywide. Many waterfront neighborhoods in the greater metropolitan area — lower Manhattan, Hoboken, and Staten Island, to name a few — are now developing mitigation plans and planning large capital projects for the shoreline. No such plan with financial backing exists for Mott Haven and Port Morris, yet some of the region’s most toxic and vulnerable industries sit in the floodplain, and residents and businesses alike are concerned. By investing in the shoreline, NYRP can make Mott Haven and Port Morris resilient in the face of climate change.

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I moved my studio and residence to the Bronx six years ago and recently relocated to Port Morris. There is a unique energy present here — one that encompasses this entire community which is filled with artists, industry, and a rich gathering of cultures. NYRP has recognized and embraced this energy and with their support, we hope to preserve what exists along this beautiful waterfront — allowing for change without destroying or displacing what makes this area so unique.

Jeanine Alfieri, Artist and resident

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Preserving and revitalizing the Port Morris Gantry as a publicly accessible, locally planned and led space will serve as an enormous resource for the existing community and the new arrivals. The rich nautical history should be recognized and invested in here in the South Bronx, as it has in other communities. With minimal investment, this City owned property, abandoned for years, would serve to enhance the environment and the economy of the area. Community boating, arts, culture and educational programming, fishing, even a ferry, can all co-exist on this unique waterfront location.

Harry Bubbins, Friends of Brook Park
IMPLICATIONS:
HOW WE’LL CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

The impact framework illustrates how the design of the Haven Project will advance neighborhood-level outcomes and impacts. The five design strategies identified are based on scientific evidence and community input and will influence factors relating to health, wellbeing, and social capital, among others.

**Strategies**
- Street Connectivity/
  Pedestrian + Bicycle
  Friendly Paths
- Social Interaction
- Tree Canopy/Density
- Traffic Calming
- Visibility/Lighting
- Local Tourism
- Organized Spatial System
- Proximity To Large Park/
  Open Space
- Connections To Nature/
  Green Space
- Recreation/Play
- Habitat Restoration
- Deposition Surface
- Stormwater/
  Green Infrastructure
- Maintenance
- Community Engagement
- Interactivity
- Cultural Appropriateness/
  Identity
- Storm Surge Protection

**Short-Term Outcomes**
- Active Transport/
  Physical Activity
- People Presence
- Social Connectedness/
  Socialization
- Biodiversity
- Microclimate
- Road Safety
- Increased Demand For
  Services
- Perception Of Self Efficacy
- Increased Neighborhood
  Retail
- Ecological Awareness
- Stress Recovery
- Stormwater Management
- Lower Crime
- Civic Engagement
- Cultural Preservation/
  Expression
- Storm Surge/
  Hazard Mitigation

**Medium-Term Outcomes**
- Decreased Diabetes Rate
  (adults)
- Lower BMI/Weight Loss
  (adults)
- Chronic Stress
- Mood
- Perceived Safety
- Lower Crime
- Increased Local Purchasing
- Social Cohesion
- Air Quality
- Traffic Related Accidents
- Increased Neighborhood
  Investment
- Heat Island Effect
- Reduction In Sewer Overflow
- Civic Engagement
- Political Mobilization
- Mitigate Job Loss
- Stewardship

**Impacts**
- Obesity Related Illness/
  Premature Death
- Cardiovascular Health
- Mental Health
- Bone Health (children)
- Muscular Fitness
- Stress Related Illness
- Local Economic Investment
- Neighborhood Safety
- Social Capital
- Ecosystem Health
- Infectious Disease
- Heat Island Effect
- Reduced Vehicular Injury
- Energy Use
- Respiratory Health
- Stewardship
- Water Quality
- Landscape Resilience
- Employment

The opening of the new connector to Randall’s Island is a truly historic moment, and the Randall’s Island Park Alliance looks forward to increased and improved access to the Park for neighbors in the South Bronx.

Aimee Boden, President, Randall’s Island Park Alliance
MEASURING SUCCESS: HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THE HAVEN PROJECT IS SUCCESSFUL?

When Mott Haven and Port Morris have a safe, clean, and beautiful network of parks and open space with access to their waterfront, we will know we have been successful. We’ll also define success by working with partners to track performance with metrics and to remain faithful to a set of values that are an important cause and effect of success. These values include stakeholder participation, sharing knowledge and data, and promoting learning and accountability to community members.

Our approach to monitoring and evaluation reflects the most progressive and recommended standards for assessing population-based change. We will balance resources and data-collection capacity with the need for information, and we will prioritize learning and disseminating information in ways that are accessible and legible to communities.

Monitoring process, as well as outcomes

Success is more than just delivering positive outcomes. It also means being able to respond to community and policy stakeholders alike about how to operationalize an ambitious framework for impact. To succeed, the Haven Project team must be able to answer questions about what works and, crucially, what doesn’t work, even when we bring all the existing knowledge and technical horsepower to bear on a complex challenge.

Therefore our approach to monitoring the project will pay attention to the process of implementation with respect to our stated values, in addition to monitoring the implementation of program and built strategies. The monitoring aspect of the plan reflects process indicators, which will be tracked against outcomes. These process indicators are an important part of interpreting the outcomes of the project, since the outcomes are a function of the process, extent, and nature of implementation.

Our focus population

The overall beneficiary population of the Haven Project is defined as those residents living in the Mott Haven–Port Morris U.S. Census Tabulation Neighborhood. However, for program evaluation, the community will also be broken down into sub-populations, including NYCHA residents. This population will serve also as a proxy for the population as a whole.

The other population that the plan will follow is that covered by Healthfirst, a non-profit health insurance company willing to share de-identified patient information for their 30,000 members in Mott Haven and Port Morris. Through this data set, we will be able to identify comparison groups with similar populations in other neighborhoods and understand population flows in and out of the neighborhood as well, and how that affects interpretation of population-level trends.

Data collection and evaluation methods

Our approach reflects mixed methods, meaning NYRP will work with partners to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection will range from observational to representative surveys. We’ll also rely on existing data sets and data sharing with key partners ranging from the Mayor’s Office and the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene to Montefiore Hospital and Healthfirst. This approach is designed to demonstrate change over time, but it also has the potential for a quasi-experimental design that will identify comparison groups to help control for environmental biases and respond to questions about attribution of effect(s).

The focus of the evaluation plan is on measuring progress against population-based outcomes (or project effectiveness measures), with a timeline for data collection analysis and reporting. The indicators for impact reflect data sets that the project will reference, in relation to outcomes that are generated, but will not engage in attribution at that level (impact evaluation).

The plan includes a formative component — a feedback loop, whereby data will be fed back to the project to inform subsequent phases and strengthen implementation throughout the project cycle. Data will be collected and continually analyzed to both track progress and to provide ample opportunity to revise, expand, or redirect project activities and data collection as needed.

Connecting our work to other efforts

The monitoring and evaluation plan also prioritizes the information most required for strengthening nationwide community-development practice — including areas that represent important knowledge gaps in the field. The evaluation will run concurrently with the implementation of the Haven Project and then extend beyond implementation to measure long-term benefits. By assessing outcomes through drawing from standard indicators and validated scales, the monitoring and evaluation plan will not only demonstrate the progress and benefits of this project, but also set up useful comparisons for other projects.

Comprehensive approaches to community development are being promoted and tested across the country, especially testing the role of creative placemaking for community transformation. By selecting shared indicators and collaborating closely with other sectors, we can contribute to collective impact.
Evaluation Plan: How We'll Track Process and Outcomes

Goal
Evaluate and transform open spaces to advance equity and related population-level health, social, economic, and ecological outcomes in Port Morris/Mott Haven. These include but are not limited to community priorities such as cardiovascular health, asthma, safety, obesity, employment, economic investment, social resilience, ecological improvement, and landscape resilience against storm surge. Working with a range of partners, NYEP will leverage existing data collection efforts.

Objectives
Through design of the public realm, address identified neighborhood-environment factors related to specific population-level health, social, economic and ecological outcomes:
1. Advance health outcomes such as physical activity, BMI, diabetes, chronic stress, traffic-related accidents and injuries
2. Expand civic engagement, social cohesion, social cohesiveness, road safety, perceived safety, actual safety, stewardship and political mobilization
3. Increase foot traffic, local spending, neighborhood services, and other investments in the neighborhood
4. Improve storm surge protection, habitat restoration, biodiversity, and storm water management
5. Expand collective impact through cross-sector collaboration and dissemination of learning

Process
Accountability/Transparency
Community and other key stakeholder perceptions on accountability and transparency
A/5 of community groups represented in the community engagement process/stakeholder meetings % of plan that is implemented Governance
Governance structure is defined and communicated to key stakeholders (yes/no)

Collective Impact/Knowledge Sharing
and type of knowledge sharing activities (community meetings, meetings with city agencies, conferences)
Legibility of project progress on physical scale (criteria and strategies TBD)

Process (Built Environment Factors)
Street Connectivity
% complete streets
Bicycle routes (km of bike lanes by classification—protected, dedicated, greenway)
% streetcar connection (roadway, sidewalk)
% of population fifteen minutes from community gathering space, by gathering space location
A/5 of planned street connections to Randall’s Island complete
Average transportation time to Randall’s Island, by type of transportation (take car, bus) from intervention zip codes
Neighborhood walking environment
Social Interaction
Level of observed social interaction, by type
Perceptions of social interaction in neighborhood
Community Engagement/Participation
# of community meetings
# of community participants attending meetings
A/5 of local community-based organizations participating in community engagement activities
Creative Placemaking/Interactivity
# of participants involved in placemaking strategies, by type (e.g., public art)
A/5 of community involved in placemaking strategies
Cultural Appropriateness
% of population that agrees with statements about cultural identification and appropriateness of intervention program

Community perspectives on cultural appropriateness of program associated with project interventions
Maintenance/Activation
6/5% of intervention area/blocks activated with sanitation, water, lighting
Visibility/Lighting
% of intervention area with lighting as planned
Local Tourism
Traffic counts (near waterfront district)
Pedestrian counts
Organized Spatial System
6/5% of street improvements by type in intervention area
Physical/solar/diurnal
Proximity To Large Park
% of community within walking distance (10-15 min.) or 20 min. bus to Randall’s Island waterfront district
Recreation/Play (Park Use)
6/5% of planned street connections to Randall’s Island complete
Randal’s Island and Waterfront utilization
Connections To Nature/Green Space
% population reporting behavior related to stewardship/participation in stewardship programs
Community perspectives on connecting to nature/green space
Traffic Calming
% of traffic calming strategies implemented, by type and block
Traffic patterns
% of intervention streets with traffic calming strategy implemented
Tree Canopy/Density
# of new trees planted per square block of intervention area
Estimated tree canopy (intersection with sidewalk)
% of opportunity area with new trees
Estimated survival rate
Storm Surge Protection
# and type of storm surge strategies implemented at coastline, by geography
% of opportunity area with storm surge protection at coastline
Habitat Restoration
% of opportunity area with regional plantings
Deposition Surface
Type of deposition surface/vegetation/greening, by geography
% of opportunity area with new deposition surface/vegetation/greening
Storm Water/Green Infrastructure
# and type of green infrastructure (interior landscape) strategies implemented, by type, by geography
% of opportunity area with green infrastructure

Short-Term Outcomes
Active Transport/Physical Activity
% population with self efficacy/behavioral control and positive beliefs related to physical activity (positive attitudes/social norms)
% of population reporting exercising 60 cumulative minutes in last 24 hours
Perception Of Self Efficacy
% community/individual reporting self efficacy (scale/score)

Obtainable hospitalization rate due to diabetes
Obtainable ER visits due to diabetes
Diabetes Rate (Adults)
% of adults (18+) with diabetes
BMI/Weight Loss
% of population with normal BMI
Chronic Stress
% of population with high stress levels
Mood
% of population with diagnosed mood disorder

Cultural Appropriateness
% of population that agrees with statements about cultural identification and appropriateness of intervention program

Perceptions of road safety
Civic Engagement
% population reporting volunteering
% of community participating in social justice community organizations
Cultural Preservation/Expression
Community perspectives on cultural preservation and expression
Social Connectedness/Socialization
% of population reporting they trust neighbors (part of scale)
% of population reporting they socialize in project enhanced areas (1 item scale)
% of population reporting perception of collective efficacy (related to trust and social cohesion)

People Presence/Traffic
Pedestrian counts
Crime/Noise
Crime Risk Variables (as available)

Increased Demand For Services
Reported demand for services (revenue)
Increased Neighborhood Retail
Retail and food presence, by type
Microclimate
Temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, radiation, wind speed, canopy cooling
Biodiversity
% of opportunity area with natural resource features (wetlands, streams, significant habitats etc.)
Ecological Awareness
% population knowledge and awareness of ecosystem health and benefits (scale/items TBD)

Storm Water Management
Inflow/Outflow, infiltration, soil moisture, water and sediment quality
Storm Surge/Risk Mitigation
Damage from subsequent storm (s)

Medium Term Outcomes
Diabetes Rate (Adults)
% of adults (18+) with diabetes
BMI/Weight Loss
% of population with normal BMI
Chronic Stress
% of population with high stress levels
Mood
% of population with diagnosed mood disorder

Accountability/Transparency
Community and other key stakeholder perceptions on accountability and transparency
% of community groups represented in the community engagement process/stakeholder meetings
% of plan that is implemented Governance
Governance structure is defined and communicated to key stakeholders (yes/no)
Collective Impact/Knowledge Sharing
% and type of knowledge sharing activities (community meetings, meetings with city agencies, conferences)
Legibility of project progress on physical scale (criteria and strategies TBD)
Together. In neighborhoods as richly complex as Mott Haven and Port Morris, meaningful change cannot happen without passionate, collaborative effort undertaken by individuals, city agencies, civic institutions, and funders. We all know critical connections exist between quality of life and the built environment, but to optimize them we must work together in new ways to transcend traditional municipal and political boundaries. Arguably, nothing is more important to human well-being than access to nature and a sense of one’s place in the world. As New York City sits at the head of one of the most productive tidal estuaries on the planet, access in our city must include waterfront access. The Haven Project will catalyze and build connections to open space and the waterfront, demonstrating how those improvements lead to better lives.

Preliminary implementation

NYRP has begun working to implement this plan. First and foremost, the Haven Project serves residents of Mott Haven and Port Morris, who have been advocating for environmental justice in their community for decades. Outreach to those residents, local community based organizations, landowners, city agencies, and many others is under way. The alliances we are building amongst these groups are rooted in the shared conviction that every human being deserves access to clean, safe, and beautiful open spaces within walking distance.

As large construction projects and neighborhood-scale transformations take time, NYRP will also work to identify and realize short-term opportunities. In 2015, our shovels will be in the ground planting 1,000 trees in Mott Haven with the help of New York State. We’ll steward those trees for two years to make sure they take root. We’re also working to improve short term safe access to the Randall’s Island Connector, recently constructed by NYEDC. Those innovative improvements will be announced in 2015.

Funding

Funding opportunities include most obviously capital construction, but to make that work possible, there are also opportunities to support design development, communications and outreach, monitoring and evaluation, wayfinding, and a range of programs. To discuss funding opportunities for the Haven Project, please contact NYRP Executive Director Deborah Marton at dmarton@nyrp.org.

NYRP planted these dogwoods at NYCHA Mott Haven Houses across from our Willis Avenue Community Garden in spring 2015.
THANK YOU TO THE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS OF MOTT HAVEN AND PORT MORRIS FOR EMBRACING THE HAVEN PROJECT AND SHARING YOUR DREAMS.

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THE HAVEN PROJECT

2 New Yorkers for Parks. Mott Haven Open Space. 2015.
3 Ibid.
10 The process and outcome indicators will be selected to measure change as indicated in each objective. They will track progress and change in population level outcomes, and will be further tailored and revised based on the shaping of design implementation, against each objective. The illustrative timeline reflects relative timing and type of change (some changes expected to take longer than others) and will be addressed accordingly in data collection.
11 Proponents with an asterisk (*) reflect concepts for which further operational definitions will be developed on report indicator.

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NYRP THANKS MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO FOR THE ENTHUSIASTIC AND CAPABLE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS FROM MANY NEW YORK CITY AGENCIES.

NYRP THANKS COUNCIL SPEAKER MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO, DISTRICT 8, AND COUNCIL MEMBER MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO, DISTRICT 17, FOR THEIR ABLE LEADERSHIP.