



Lowline Community Engagement Meeting Recap June 13, 2016, 6-8pm, Grand Street Guild Residents Association

Longtime residents of the Lower East Side, local advocates and organization leaders gathered on June 13, 2016 for the Lowline's first Community Engagement Committee meeting. Below you will find a detailed meeting recap.

Questions and comments can be sent to info@thelowline.org.

1. Margaret Chin, NYC Council Member, District 1, provided remarks on the Lowline project, overviewing the history of the organization, and the positive impact the future park could have on local residents, and the community at large.
2. Dan Barasch, Co-Founder, the Lowline, provided an overview on the Lowline project, and the Lowline Lab.
3. Public discussion covered the following topics:
 - a. Programming ideas for the future Lowline
 - b. Design ideas for the future Lowline
 - c. Concerns + challenges regarding the future Lowline
 - d. Short term ideas + community oriented uses for the Lowline Lab
 - e. Committee leadership, governance, and roles + responsibilities
 - f. Next steps

Ideas covered per topic:

1. **Programming ideas for the future Lowline:**
 - a. Youth programming and school-based programming at the future Lowline will tap into a definite need in the community. The Lowline's Young Designers Program, a free science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education platform will continue. Additional ideas including a gardening education programs; and educational programming dedicated to aquaponics, solar energy, and the history of the Lower East Side.
 - b. There is a demonstrable need in the area for programs geared toward teens. How can the Lowline actively engage teens when thinking about cultural and educational programming?
 - c. Dedicating time-frames for local groups and organizations to use the park for meetings and events will help build and maintain partnerships that ensure the future Lowline is a vibrant space, built by and for the local community
 - d. Cultural programming should be intimately tied in with the local community. The Lowline should partner with curators rooted in the neighborhood, and local community based groups to ensure that artists and presenters are reflective of the community's history and cultural vibrancy.
2. **Design ideas for the future Lowline:**
 - a. Passive use is incredibly important—benches and other opportunities for relaxation and creative play should not be overlooked, and the park should be designed to accommodate this.
 - b. The Lowline should respect the history of the trolley terminal, including the historic features such as the trolley tracks and cobblestones.

- c. Consider absolute modularity and flexibility in terms of use of the space, rather than fixed structural architectural features. Flexible use will enable longstanding growth for future generations.
- d. Maintaining the authenticity of the neighborhood. Allow local musicians to play in the space like they do in the train station. Have sprinklers for kids as well as a mini ice-cream truck that will keep it feeling like a real park.
- e. Look into having Essex Crossing come in to explain the location of all new buildings and the location of the actual Lowline to give residents peace of mind that their current establishments will not be lost.

3. **Concerns + challenges regarding the future Lowline:**

- a. How do we keep the future park safe, and ensure that it will be properly maintained in the short and long-term?
- b. Due to the Lowline's novelty, individuals from across New York City and around the world will be interested in this space, and to a certain extent will be a destination for out of state and international visitors. How do we maintain the future Lowline as a vibrant, community space, free and open to the public, amidst widespread interest? And furthermore, how do we properly manage touristic interest as a revenue generator for the local community, while also considering deep community concerns, such as rising rent costs, and the preservation of longstanding local businesses?
- c. How do we establish the future Lowline as a welcoming place to people of all backgrounds and income levels? In looking toward revenue generating models from visitors, it is important to ensure that these methods do not alienate local residents, many of whom live in low-income housing, and may be intimidated by a suggested donation.
 - i. Initial ideas include a partnership with NYC ID, wherein the future Lowline and all its activities would be free or discounted for NYC residents; creating a "cool culture card" for local youth; recruiting volunteers from the local community to maintain the future Lowline, so as to sustain a sense of belonging in local residents; offering free space to local organizations and groups for meetings and events; and establishing dedicated time-frames for youth and seniors to enjoy the park, as well as establish age-specific programming.
- d. A revenue stream for the future Lowline will be necessary to fund operational costs. How do we balance funding relationships and vendor revenue with the needs of the community?
 - i. Initial ideas include highlighting vendors that resonate with and are affordable for local residents; and establishing a small scale "farmers market".

4. **Short-term goals + community oriented uses for the Lowline Lab**

- a. Conduct design charrettes in the next 6-months to receive feedback from community members in a variety of age ranges, from youth to seniors.
- b. Provide a tour of the Lowline Lab for residents at Grand Street Guild.
- c. Continue to reach out to local community members, and offer the Lowline Lab as a free meeting space for local community based organizations and groups.



5. Committee leadership, governance, and roles + responsibilities:

- a. The Community Engagement Committee was called for to ensure that the future Lowline represents a diverse group of people in the neighborhood, and addresses the needs of the community. Committee members may manage and plan for the space, helping to shape its design and programmatic vision. By beginning this important work now, we can ensure that we create a vibrant community space together, securing local investment and ownership in the project. The Committee will be designed to sustain itself through the future Lowline's conception and creation, and beyond its completion.
- b. The next meeting should delve deeper into the core issues put forth. Being mindful of time, we will break Committee members up into small groups discuss core issues. Small groups will report back prior to the culmination of the meeting with suggested next steps. This process may lead to the formulation of subcommittees.
- c. A stated goal, or series of goals for the Committee will be decided on by Committee members over the course of the next 2-3 meetings.

6. Next steps:

- a. The next Committee meeting will be held on XXX, and led by XXX. By the end of the meeting we will:
 - i. Create a draft of the core goals the Committee wishes to take on
 - ii. Establish a list of primary community concerns + challenges for the Committee to address

Attendee List for 6/13:

Dan Barasch, the Lowline
Dominic Berg, Community Board 3
David Bolotsky, Friends of Gulick Park
Huy Bui, An Choi and Plant-in-City
Minerva Bruno, local resident
MyPhuong Chung, Community Board 3
Talia DeRogatis, Henry Street Settlement
Joe Dolice, local resident
Dolores, local resident
Tiffany Duran, local resident
Alison Fleminger, University Settlement
Jacob Gianaris, the Lowline
Monica Guardiola, Office of Alice Cancel
Bonnie Hernandez, Grand Street Guild Residents Association
Trevor Holland, Two Bridges Tenant Association
Linda Jones, Community Board 3
Meghan Joye, Community Board 3, local business owner
Melissa Laboy, local resident
Sue Lalchan, Grand Street Settlement AmeriCorps Program
Gigi Li, Community Board 3
Marissa Martin, Expanded Schools
Carmen Mator, local resident
Shantelena Mouzon, Young Designers Program parent



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Signe Nielsen, Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects
Daisy Paez, Grand Street Guild Residents Association
Anchael Ng, local resident
Victoria Reichelt, local resident
Tunisia K. Riley, local resident
Elsie Rivera, Grand Street Guild Residents Association
Justin Rivera, the Lowline
Robyn Shapiro, the Lowline
Marquise Stillwell, Lowline Board Member
Sandra Strother, Grand Street Guild Residents Association
Courtney Surmanek, the Lowline
Rudda Torres, local resident
Eladia Velg, local resident

Confirmed Committee members to date:

Judith Belliard, Henry Street Settlement
Dominic Berg, Community Board 3
Rabbi Aviad Bodner, Stanton Street Shul
David Bolotsky, Friends of Gulick Park
Huy Bui, An Choi and Plant-in-City
Thanh Bui, Grand Street Settlement
Simon Chiew, Chinese American Planning Council
Scott Conti, New Design High School
Talia DeRogatis, Henry Street Settlement
Alison Fleminger, University Settlement
Trevor Holland, Two Bridges Tenant Association
Linda Jones, Community Board 3
Meghan Joye, CB3, local business owner
Sue Lalchan, Grand Street Settlement AmeriCorps Program
Tim Laughlin, LES Partnership
Brett and Ella Leitner, local residents
Gigi Li, Community Board 3
Shantelena Mouzon, Young Designers Program parent
Anchael Ng, local resident
Carmen Orta, Seward Park Extension
Nancy Ortiz, Vladeck Houses
Daisy Paez, Grant Street Guild Residents Association
Victoria Reichelt, local resident
Anne Saxelby, Essex Street Market
Risa Shoup, Fourth Arts Block
Carolyn Sickles, Henry Street Settlement / Abrons Art Center
Marquise Stillwell, Lowline Board Member
Nadia Tykulsker, Fourth Arts Block
Alan Van Capelle, Educational Alliance
Thomas Yu, Asian Americans for Equality