

Gowanus Waterfront Access Plan Recommendations

Recommendation: Zoning text addition/amendment

Referenced existing zoning text or other precedent

Unanswered Questions

PATHS

Goal: Promote diverse elevations and cross-sections across the waterfront to encourage high pathways above flood elevations as well as low pathways, get downs, and planted areas that improve drainage, accessibility, and habitat.

Recommendation: Allow the primary path be below design flood elevation if there is another path above DFE of at least 6' that connects to it

62-62 (a) Circulation and access

BULKHEAD & PLANTED EDGES

Goal: Promote low bulkheads where possible, to allow access, drainage and habitat and for structural stability.

Recommendation: Allow planting, habitat installation or boat access installed below mean high tide to be included in the area of the waterfront yard

62-332 #Rear yard# regulations shall be inapplicable on #waterfront zoning lots#. In lieu thereof, a #waterfront yard# shall be provided along the entire length of the #shoreline#, bulkhead or stabilized natural shore, whichever is furthest landward, with a depth as set forth in the following table. The minimum depth shall be measured from the landward edge of the bulkhead, landward edge of stabilized natural shore or, in the case of natural #shorelines#, the mean high water line.

PAVING

Goal: Promote use of a collage of new and reused materials, that speak to Gowanus industrial history.

Recommendation: Allow ADA compliant¹ metal grating on required circulation paths.

Recommendation: Allow gravel (including decomposed granite) over permeable surface other than within req. circulation paths

Question: Will permeable surfaces be required per DEC regulations?

*62-656 Paving in #waterfront public access areas# shall comply with the following: (a) Locational requirements (1) **Within required circulation paths:** (i) Unit pavers constituted of stone, concrete, granite, asphalt or a mix of these materials with other aggregates; (ii) Concrete, prefabricated, poured or permeable; (iii) Wood planks for boardwalk or decking, except that tropical hardwood shall not be permitted; (iv) Solid plastic, such as "plastic lumber," high density polyethylene, wood composite plastic or fiberreinforced plastic. (2) **Other than within required circulation paths In addition to the permitted paving materials of paragraph:** (a)(1) of this Section, the following materials shall be permitted anywhere in a #waterfront public access area#: (i) Blocks such as Belgian blocks, cobble*

¹ ADA 2010: Openings in floor or ground surfaces shall not allow passage of a sphere more than ½ inch (13 mm) diameter except as allowed in 407.4.3, 409.4.3, 410.4, 810.5.3 and 810.10. Elongated openings shall be placed so that the long dimension is perpendicular to the dominant direction of travel.

stones, concrete cobbles or Eurocobble; (ii) **Gravel, loose, installed over a solid surface or glued with resin**; (iii) Wood chips or other similar material; (iv) **Metal grating, limited to locations that require drainage and for platforms**; (v) Asphalt, impermeable or porous, which may be imprinted with thermoplastic patterns. (3) Special regulations for Type 2 #upland connections# Paving for driveways and pedestrian paths shall be subject to the standards of the New York City Department of Transportation for roadbeds and sidewalks.

LIGHTING

Goal: Adjust the lighting requirements to account for narrow 2-sided waterbody; to be more in line with DOT requirements; to acknowledge the desire for dark skies in the community; and to account for advances in lighting technology such as the transition to LED fixtures.

Horizontal Illuminance and Full Spectrum Sources

Horizontal illuminance levels referenced in the DOT requirements are based on older light sources, such as High Pressure Sodium (HPS) lamps, that are not full spectrum. The transition to new LED fixtures has occurred without any adjustments in the illuminance and uniformity. Average illuminance should be reduced to at maximum the DOT average requirement for sidewalks, walkways and bikeways of .695 foot candles (see below). Better would be to require or recommend a range of illuminance levels based on potential for pedestrian conflict. See chart from the City of Los Angeles Lighting Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Areas below.

Recommendation: An average maintained level of illumination of not less than .695 horizontal foot candle (lumens per foot) throughout all walkable areas, and a minimum level of illumination of not less than 0.2 horizontal foot candles (lumens per foot) throughout all other areas.

DOT Lighting Design Manual

	Average Illuminance	Illuminance Uniformity
Roadways		
Collector*	8 - 12 lux (.74 - 1.11 footcandles)	4:1
Local**	6 - 9 lux (.56 - .84 footcandles)	6:1
Intersections		
Collector/Collector	16 - 24 lux (1.49 - 2.23 footcandles)	4:1
Collector/Local	14 - 20 lux (1.30 - 1.86 footcandles)	4:1
Local/Local	12 - 18 lux (1.11 - 1.67 footcandles)	4:1
Plazas, Walkways, & Bikeways	5 - 10 lux (.46 - .93 footcandles)	6:1

City of Los Angeles Lighting Design Guidelines

TABLE 1

Road and Pedestrian Conflict Area		ROADWAY					SIDEWALK			
		OLD RP-8-77 ILLUMINANCE VALUES		NEW RP-8-00 ILLUMINANCE VALUES (Table 2 – pg. 8)			OLD RP-8-00 ILLUMINANCE VALUES		NEW RP-8-00 ILLUMINANCE VALUES	
Road	Pedestrian Conflict Area	Roadway Illuminance (fc)	Uniformity Ratio	Roadway Luminance (fc)	Uniformity ratio	Veiling Luminance ratio	Sidewalk Illuminance (fc)	Uniformity ratio	Sidewalk Illuminance (fc)	Uniformity ratio
Major	High	2	3	1.7	3	0.3	0.9	4	1	4
	Medium	1.4	3	1.3	3	0.3	0.6	4	0.5	4
	Low	1	3	0.9	3	0.3	0.2	4	0.4	4
Collector	High	1.2	3	1.2	4	0.4	0.9	4	1	4
	Medium	0.9	3	0.9	4	0.4	0.6	4	0.5	4
	Low	0.6	3	0.6	4	0.4	0.2	10	0.3	6
Local	High	0.9	6	0.9	6	0.4	0.6	4	1	4
	Medium	0.6	6	0.7	6	0.4	0.4	4	0.5	4
	Low	0.4	6	0.4	6	0.4	0.2	10	0.3	6

Comparison of Illumination Requirements:

NYC Zoning (shore public walkway) = average 1 FC in walkable areas; minimum .2 FC in other areas

NYC DOT (plazas, bikeways, walkways) = average .695 FC (range .46 to .93FC)

LA (sidewalks on local roads) = average .6 FC (range .3 to 1 FC)

Dawn/Dusk Timing

Current WAP guidelines call for lighting to turn on 30 minutes prior to sunset and turn off 30 minutes after sunrise. We suggest using Civil Twilight, (a better predictor of sky brightness and usable light rather than sunset/sunrise), as the guide to activate electric lighting.

Recommendation: Use Civil Twilight

Vertical Illuminance

Vertical illuminance is required to gauge size, build, body language, and facial expressions of approaching strangers to determine if they may be a threat. Threshold minimums for vertical illuminance along walkways should be included in city guidelines.

Recommendation: Include vertical illuminance levels.

Color Rendering Index (CRI)

Currently the WAP calls for a minimum CRI value of 65. This references older light source technology, but with virtually all lighting sources now moving over to LED, the specified value should be updated to be a minimum CRI of 80. Higher CRI values can enable better visibility without requiring increases in power.

Recommendation: The luminaire shall be equipped with lamps with a color temperature range of 3000 K to 4100 K with a minimum color rendering index of 80.

62-653 Lighting

All waterfront public access areas shall provide lighting in accordance with the following requirements: An average maintained level of illumination of not less than one horizontal foot candle (lumens per foot) throughout all walkable areas, and a minimum level of illumination of not less than 0.2 horizontal foot candles (lumens per foot) throughout all other areas, shall be required. Such level of illumination shall be maintained from one-half hour before sunset to one-half hour after sunrise. The average illumination to minimum foot candle uniformity ratio shall be no greater than 10:1 within a waterfront public access area. Glare shall be controlled to a semi-cutoff standard (not more than five percent of peak foot candle intensity radiating above 90 degrees and 20 percent of peak intensity above 80 degrees). The luminaire shall be equipped with lamps with a color temperature range of 3000 K to

4100 K with a **minimum color rendering index of 65**. All lenses and globes shall be polycarbonate or equivalent. All lighting sources that illuminate a #waterfront public access area# and are mounted on or located within #buildings# adjacent to the #waterfront public access area# shall be shielded from direct view. In addition, all lighting within the #waterfront public access area# shall be shielded to minimize any adverse effect on surrounding #buildings# containing #residences#.

PLANTING

Goal: Establish diverse, resilient, plant communities that tolerate the range of disturbances found in Gowanus and provide a broad range of ecosystem services across different landscape types: habitat for wildlife including marine ecosystems, stormwater management, erosion control, carbon sequestration, and mitigation of urban heat island.

Recommendation: Edit below to add “below mean high tide”

62-62 (ii) Up to 15 percent of the required planting area may be located seaward of a #shore public walkway# and shall be measured in plan view and not along the planted slope; or

Recommendation: Allow plantings below boardwalks to count towards planting requirement.

62-62 (4) Reduction in minimum required planting area

Recommendation: Remove lawn requirement for supplemental public access areas.

62-62 (i) Where a #supplemental public access area# is greater than 1,875 square feet, at least 25 percent of the required planting area of the #shore public walkway# and #supplemental public access area#, combined, shall be provided as lawn;

Recommendation: In addition to emphasis currently in the text, provide recommended plant species guidelines to promote the use of native and drought and salt-tolerant plantings in all required plantings through use of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation’s *Native Species Planting Guide for New York City* and/or *Gowanus Design Guidelines*.²

62-655 *Planting and trees. A detailed landscape plan ... shall include plants suited for waterfront conditions and include a diversity of species with emphasis on native plants, salt tolerance and the facilitation of sustainable wildlife habitats, where appropriate.*

Recommendation: Allow wet swales that manage groundwater to count toward stormwater mitigation requirements for new development.

NYC DEP 2012 Stormwater Guidelines: Current regulations require...

“The bottom of all infiltration practices must be located a minimum of three feet above the groundwater table to prevent possible groundwater infiltration into the sewer system, and boring logs must be submitted to establish groundwater table levels.”

SUPPLEMENTAL PUBLIC SPACES, STREETS AND BRIDGES

Goal: Facilitate a welcoming, accessible and continuous public park along the canal.

² Established in 2013, the *Native biodiversity planting practices* law, requires native species outlined in this guide to be planted in public landscapes. This rule could be adapted for privately owned public spaces in Gowanus.

Recommendation: Require or incentivize the construction and maintenance of publicly owned street ends and street plazas as extensions of shore public walkways, and supplemental public space at bridge crossings and key corridors.

PROGRAMMING

Goal: Incentivize program spaces, such as playgrounds, public art, boat launches and active recreation, within entirety of public access areas.

What is the most effective way to achieve the recommendations below?

Recommendation: Allow as permitted obstructions:

- Kiosk - allow larger than 150 SF if includes public restroom
- Boathouse - in SPWW and Visual Corridor
- Public Restroom

Recommendation: Allow Tot-lots and playgrounds within 20' of shoreline

62-611 Permitted Obstructions (a) ... (b) Beyond 20 feet of #shoreline# Tot-lots, playgrounds

Recommendation: Incorporate Amenity Square Feet Reduction (as in BK-1 WAP) or planting reduction to incentivize:

- Public art installation
- Historic interpretation or education elements
- BBQ area
- Play area
- Boat launch
- Fountain/water feature

62-931 Waterfront Access Plan BK-1: Greenpoint-Williamsburg: (b) Amenities. A reduction in the total amount of required #supplemental public access area# shall be permitted according to the table in this paragraph, (b): Amenity Square feet reduction: Picnic table 22 sq. ft. per table (max. 200 sq. ft.); Chess table 20 sq. ft. per table (max. 200 sq. ft.); Telescope 10 sq. ft. per telescope (max. 50 sq. ft.); Fountain/water feature 150 sq. ft. per feature (max. 300 sq. ft.); Shade structure 150 sq. ft. per structure (max. 300 sq. ft.)

Recommendation: Require active ground floor uses and in-building community amenities along SPWW, including:

- Public bathrooms
- Community meeting and educational spaces
- Artist studios

62-212 Waterfront-Enhancing (WE) uses

Recommendation: Require community oversight of waterfront certifications.

In Greenpoint/Williamsburg the community has pushed for oversight of waterfront certifications, which currently can result in changes to the shore public walkways without a clear process for community review.

Recommendation: Require community-driven programming in privately-owned public spaces.

Community oversight of public realm changes have precedent in previous re-zonings including the requirement for a community-elected Board that approves programming in Domino Park and the provision for an Improvement Fund for public realm improvements in the Midtown East Subdistrict, which is governed by a Governing Group that outlines planning priorities for the district.

SIGNAGE

*Recommendation: Remove logo requirement - replace with signage design by Gowanus artist
62-654 Signage (a) Entry signage*

MAINTENANCE

Recommendation: Add Gowanus to the stipulation below to allow for joint maintenance plans

62-73 Request to Transfer Title to Certain Waterfront Public Access Areas

For parcels identified in Waterfront Access Plan BK-1, the owners of two or more parcels may, either for purposes of certification pursuant to Section 62-811 or at any time thereafter, submit an alternate plan to the Chairperson for the joint maintenance and operation of #waterfront public access areas# on such parcels, through an association or other entity established for this purpose or by other method.