

Civic Environmental Stewardship as a Form of Governance in New York City

Erika S. Svendsen

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ABSTRACT

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Erika S. Svendsen

This study uses theories of ecological modernization (Mol, 2000; Mol, Sonnenfeld, & Spaargaren, 2009; A. P. J. Mol & G. Spaargaren, 2000; Tatenhove & Leroy, 2003) to understand better urban environmental stewardship groups and urban governance.

Earlier versions of ecological modernization focus on the role of government and market actors as lead catalysts in addressing persistent environmental problems at the national and international level. However, in the urban environment, civic actors have long been at the forefront of addressing environmental concerns and, in certain instances, engaging in long-term management of public resources. How do contemporary civil society groups emerge as leaders in the field of urban environmental planning and open space management? How does that emergence explain the relationship between civic groups and government authorities as a new form of hybrid governance? Using a comparative case study design that involves a qualitative methodology grounded in open-ended, semi-structured interviews, I examine three public space projects in New York City within the boroughs of Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx. Included in this examination are the civic and governmental actors engaged in and around the three project sites. The study finds that the type of stewardship group combined with the nature of contentious politics can lead to varying degrees of hybrid governance. The study concludes that civil society has an important role to play within the framework of ecological modernization as civic groups engage shape state-led planning processes and take the lead in developing new models of urban governance.

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Dedication

To my USDA Forest Service Family: Lindsay K. Campbell, J. Morgan Grove, Dexter Locke, Michael T. Rains, Mark Twery, and Lynne Westphal

To my mother, Rosalind and my mother-in-law, Mary – for their unconditional support when I needed it the most

To Pete, Roan and Kieran

To my dear professors and colleagues, Dana R. Fisher and Mary E. Northridge

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To social ecologist William R. Burch, Jr.
Whose teaching and friendship have been with me ever since taking his course nearly
20 years ago

CHAPTER ONE

Urban Environmental Stewardship

The design and management of natural resources to enhance human life can be traced back thousands of years to the earliest urban civilizations. From irrigation projects of the Indus Valley to the Roman aqueducts and sewage systems to designing integrated systems of landscaped urban parks and stream valleys, humans have sought to harness the capacity of nature to advance public health and prosperity. Within this history one finds a wide range of social actors engaged in the competition over urban land as its scarcity intensifies.

Environmental historians have remarked that the late 19th and 20th Century is distinct as it reflects an unprecedented change in human settlements, technology, and global markets that have dramatically restructured the relationship between society and nature (Cronon, 1991, 1995; McNeill, 2003). Civil society and the state, at different historical moments, have become concerned with the environment and the provision of public goods, noting that urban land use and consumption patterns have produced many benefits as well as unexpected risks to human health and prosperity.

Sociologists, ecologists and urban planners alike have argued for the need to understand better the social-ecological factors that impact urban land use (Barthel, Colding, Elmqvist, & Folke, 2005; W. R. Burch, Jr., 1976; W. R. Burch, Jr. & Grove, 1993; Grimm, Grove, Pickett, & Redman, 2000; McDonnell & Pickett, 1993; Redman, Grove, & Kuby, 2004; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008). Multi-sector and interdisciplinary by nature, urban environmental issues offer new opportunities for “state-society synergies” and collaborative management (Evans, 2002). At the same time, a growing

interest in governance has thrust the role of institutions and organizational networks into the policy limelight as they affect public choice and decision-making (Aspinwall & Schneider, 2000). This study is focused on understanding the role of urban environmental groups in urban planning processes and governance. More specifically, how do contemporary civil society groups emerge as leaders in the field of urban park and environmental planning? How does that emergence explain the relationship between civic groups and government authorities as a new form of environmental governance?

In the urban setting, theorists have debated the degree of formality of governance arrangements among the private and public sector, noting that both are critical aspects of local decision-making (Dahl, 1961; Stone, 1989). However, a great deal of urban planning is focused on financial markets as the driving force shaping urban social forces (N. Fainstein & Fainstein, 1989; Susan S. Fainstein, 1990). The persistence of urban markets is explored from a historical perspective in terms of a democratic-capitalist contradiction where the social use and exchange value of urban space is debated (Foglesong, 1986). The ‘city as growth machine’ thesis is a well-documented approach to the analysis of urban planning and politics (Susan S. Fainstein & Hirst, 1999; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Mollenkopf, 1989). And other theorists have argued that financial markets, rather than planners, can be the best appropriators of urban space (Klosterman, 1985).

Alongside market-based approaches to understanding cities, urban planning theory includes utopian models of economic integration (Friedmann, 2000) and frameworks emphasizing diversity and difference (Sandercock, 1998; Young, 2000). Urban planning theory has long emphasized the need for public participation in planning processes and, at times, has called for advocacy planning where urban planners work directly for the benefit

of the disadvantaged (Davidoff, 1965). More recently, the notion of communicative planning has been posited as a way to mediate market forces and models of economic efficiency using discussion and debate (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Healey, 1996). Narratives or ‘storytelling’ has been discussed as a particularly effective means of sustainability planning (Eckstein & Throgmorton, 2003).

Case study evidence suggests that power and efficiency models often over rule democratic and communicative planning models (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Decades ago, Robert Dahl’s 1967 case of “Who Governs” in New Haven, Connecticut examined the dynamic between top-down and bottom-up urban planning and political processes. Dahl noted that neighborhood level planning models were often democratic but had little ability to effect planning outcomes. Power resided at the top where there was less opportunity for public participation (Dahl, 1961). Urban planning theory continues to struggle with the notion of power and participation acknowledging that a shared vision of justice and equity must be addressed by all levels of society (Susan S. Fainstein, 2010).

In the case of urban parks and environmental planning, decision-making structures not only impact the distribution of public goods but also affect the quality of life for millions of urban residents and visitors (S. Campbell, 1996). Despite this fact, there is little understanding as to the processes and mechanisms of civic environmental stewardship as a form of urban governance. Much of what is empirically known about urban parks is historically based and emphasizes the role of urban park elite in the development or ‘flagship’ parks such as Central Park in New York City (Scobey, 2003; D. E. Taylor, 2009). While collaborative governance may be considered a democratic ideal for some, there is evidence to suggest that these arrangements tend to limit public

participation over time and eventually are reduced to centralized decision-making structures (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Roelofs, 2009; Sabatier et al., 2005; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005; D. E. Taylor, 2009).

In terms of urban park development, civic-state partnerships have become a concern of planning and advocacy groups as they are thought to preference higher-income communities (Leichner, 2010). Historically, the majority of private funding for public park projects comes from local business tax revenue, corporation sponsorships or the private wealth of residents. Similar to concerns over the dominance of the urban park elite over one hundred years ago, the primary critique of contemporary public-private partnerships is that they privilege private interests. A general consensus of private sector leaders and policy-makers is that such partnerships are commonly associated with higher income neighborhoods or citizen groups with the potential to raise significant financial support (Piriani, 2007). Civic advocates suggest that reliance on the private sector reinforces the existence of a two-tiered park system where lower income areas are placed at an inherent disadvantage in terms of quality urban parks. Private financing of public stewardship has created parks in 21st Century cities reminiscent of a 19th Century class divide in terms of “well-endowed parks and derelict counterparts in poor neighborhoods,” (D. E. Taylor, 2009; Dorceta E. Taylor, 2009:338). In addition, there is a growing consensus among advocates that urban park conservancies are not transparent in terms of their financial and program decision-making (Leichner, 2010).

While the focus of urban parks and issues of environmental justice often center upon accessibility and the quality of open space, this study examines how contemporary civic groups move beyond contention to engage with state actors in environmental

governance. The study explores the role of civic and state organizations as they work together to create local spheres of influence to plan, design, build and govern new parks and open spaces. It is centered on the relationship between civic stewardship organizations and government entities, while acknowledging the voluntary participation of urban business elites and market forces as a critical undercurrent of urban environmental decision-making. The overall objective of the study is to better understand how certain groups establish themselves as leaders and mediate a complex system of social norms critical to urban planning and governance. This understanding is thought to be useful for urban natural resource managers as well as civic stewards in developing innovative partnerships to enhance the quality of the urban environment.

The Human Ecosystem Model: A Conceptual Model for the Research

Building off of long term urban ecological research in Baltimore and Phoenix (Grimm et al., 2000; Pickett et al., 1997), this research applies the Human Ecosystem Model (HEM) (Machlis, Force, & William R. Burch, 1997) to case studies of community-based groups and urban park planning institutions in New York City. A variety of stewards – individuals, non-profits, and government agencies—care for and manage the urban environment while the urban environment provides benefits to urban residents. The Human Ecosystem Model offers a holistic and dynamic understanding of the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations (public, private, and civil society), culture, and norms—not just as sociological concerns, but also as key contributors to the biophysical functioning of cities. From a practical or managerial standpoint, determining how best to manage the urban ecosystem requires a consideration of these human organizations as vital parts of the urban ecosystem.

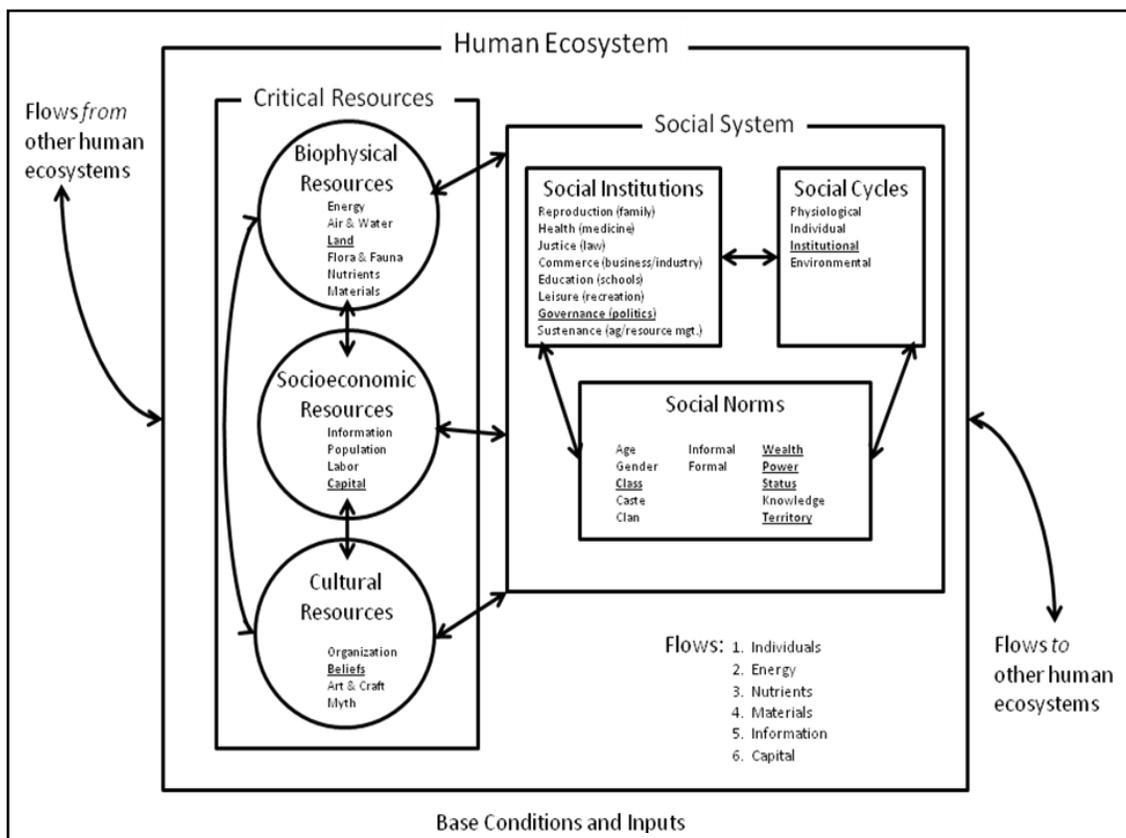


Figure 1-1. The Human Ecosystem Model (HEM) developed by Machlis, Force and Burch (1997) helps explain the relationships between the social system, critical resources and dynamic flows of information, capital, materials, energy and human impulses.

While one could investigate any number of aspects from the HEM (see Figure 1-1), the study examines civic and local government organizations as the primary institutions engaged in the planning, design, construction and governance of parks and open spaces. In a study of social service organizations in Brooklyn, New York (Marwell, 2007) found that while urban sociologists often view local neighborhood organizations as proxies for individual participation and collective action, they are organizational components of a much larger system of processes and functions that cut across landscapes and geographies. In fact, local, community-based organizations are often active participants in reshaping the political and economic domain.

Community-based organizations are not simply undifferentiated shells within which individuals meet to build social networks and gain interpersonal trust within a neighborhood. Rather, they are contenders within systems of economic and political decision-making, and their efforts to strike better bargains within these fields can sometimes lead to improved opportunities for individuals on the ground (Marwell 2007:24).

Environmental stewardship groups, in particular, are chosen for study because they are agents that interact with both the biophysical resources and the social system of the human ecosystem. Stewardship groups can be any combination of civic, state and business actors working to conserve, manage, monitor, advocate for, and educate the public about their environments (Dana R Fisher, Campbell, & Svendsen, in process; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008).

In the case of urban park development, the private business sector, also known as civic-minded capitalists (Scobey, 2003) or the urban park elite (D. Taylor 2009) have historically been involved in planning processes through voluntary participation in civic groups. At the same time, the market continues to be an active force in shaping environmental mechanisms. A recent case analysis of park and tree planting projects in four Milwaukee neighborhoods found there were varying degrees of collaboration between civil society and the state, with market mechanisms providing the parameters by which these groups negotiated local environmental policies (Perkins, 2009). In this study, local environmental stewardship organizations become the lens through which larger urban planning processes are understood. This includes acknowledging the role of urban business elites and market forces in open space decision-making. The intent is to gain greater insight into the relationship between civic groups and local government in urban environmental planning processes. In particular, the study examines how certain stewardship groups establish themselves as leaders and mediate a complex system of social norms including wealth, power, status and access.

The Contested Nature of Urban Park Planning

Public parks and open spaces are critical catalysts for improving health and well-being, strengthening social cohesion, fostering democratic principles and providing benefits to urban biophysical systems (W. R. Burch, Jr. & Grove, 1993; L. Campbell & Wiesen, 2009; Fein, 1981; Fishman, 1997, 2003; Melosi, 2000; Parsons & Schuyler, 2002; Seymour, 1969; Shandas & Messer, 2008; Westphal, 2003). Thus, they are important contributions that are often contested when urban space is limited and opportunities for development are constrained (Fox, Koeppe, & Kellam, 1985). As part of his history of urban planning in the late 19th Century, Robert Fogelsong uses the establishment of public parks as an example of a ‘democratic-capitalist contradiction’ whereby the desire for urban social space competes with the flow of capital and private interests (Foglesong, 1986). In fact the history of parks is fraught with triumphs and tragedies as the struggle for the urban environment creates tension between social classes, cultural values, economic gains and core principles of democracy (Cranz, 1982).

In the 19th Century, the idea of an urban park shifted from private playgrounds and recreation areas for the wealthy to public spaces such as Central Park in New York City, Grant Park in Chicago and the Boston Common. Not everyone was enamored with these parks. In fact, low-income communities were removed in order to establish certain historic urban parks of the late 19th Century (D. E. Taylor, 2009). Of these parks, Central Park was one of the first publicly financed, large-scale capital projects undertaken by a local government. While publicly managed, the establishment of Central Park was championed by an elite group of local businessmen (and their wives) who stood to benefit financially and socially from its construction (D. E. Taylor, 2009). Comprised of local

politicians and wealthy New Yorkers, the park's Board of Directors established and enforced public rules of social order and conduct in the park. The notion was that the pastoral and artistic design of Central Park, combined with proper rules of behavior would serve to civilize and improve the lives of an untamed labor force (Cranz, 1982; Fein, 1972, 1981). In response to the development of Central Park and what D. Taylor (2009) has described as an urban park elite, a new breed of park advocate arose in the 20th Century championing need for smaller, neighborhood parks that could support local community needs.

Cranz (1982) has created an urban park typology that spans the 19th and 20th Centuries. The period from 1900-1930 is defined as the *reform era* of urban park development. It was during this time that progressively minded social service workers used park design and programming to improve the lives of working class and immigrant families. The notion was that too much leisure time could easily turn into idle time. The Progressives feared that idle time in working class communities would lead to immoral behavior such as drinking, gambling, and other boisterous activities.

Cranz (1982) also writes that this was the era of rational planning where administrators used mathematical formulas to plan public parks. For example, parks were allocated based upon the minimum square footage that children were expected to need for play rather than the assessing the need for variation in form and function. While historical accounts reveal resistance to the well-intended acts of social workers, the reform era gave rise to a reactionary urban park movement. The power base of the community park movement did not reside within bank board rooms and city council

chambers but emanated from local civic associations, immigrant groups, schools and churches (D. E. Taylor, 2009).

Since the establishment of the early urban park movement, different social periods have used the provision of urban parks to improve local communities with varying emphasis on social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects. This includes the *recreation facility era (1930-1965)* where Parks Department officials strayed from the notion of using the parks as a tool for social reform (Cranz, 1982). Under the leadership of famed city planner Robert Moses, urban park form and function became highly routinized. During this time, management placed an emphasis on economic efficiency and formulaic park design. For as much as New Yorkers appreciated new parks, comfort stations and pools, there was still a great uproar from community groups over the design and function of many of these spaces (Rosenzweig, 1992).

Within the time period described by Cranx (1982) as the *open space system (1965-present)*, there was a key turning where the public resisted the notion of public parks as places of social order and government control. On March 26, 1966 thousands assembled in Central Park for a three-hour protest against the war in Vietnam marking this the first protest held in the park since the women's suffrage meeting in 1914 (Rosenzweig, 1992). Throughout the city, the public developed a new attitude towards parks using the streets, sidewalks, backyards, vacant lots, waterfronts and rooftops as playground and incorporating them as part of a public system of open space.

While some highlight the open space innovation and creativity of this era, the notion of "anything goes" has been criticized by residents and park managers alike who thought the public parks were unruly, unmanageable and overtaken by particular social

groups (interview with Stone 2007). Remnants of these time periods can be seen today as park managers struggle to find the appropriate mix of parks and recreational facilities and as community groups rise up in protest over access to and the condition of their neighborhood parks.

Since the 1980s, the number of organized civic environmental efforts is on the rise in cities in the Northeastern United States (Svendsen & Campbell, 2008). This supports Cranz's notion of a new era of urban park planning which is based upon multifaceted issues related to urban sustainability (Cranz & Boland, 2004). At the same time, because reoccurring themes of social norms, beliefs and modes of public participation appear through the history of urban park planning, the formation of local, community-based organizations may emerge not from a particular moment in time or specific environmental issue but in response to a complex history of civic and state interactions.

While policy-makers and scholars acknowledge the importance of local peoples and their work to conserve, manage, monitor, advocate for, and educate the public about their environments, it is unclear how individual citizens, non-profit organizations, businesses and governments develop more formal systems of governance including shared decision-making, resources, and political power (Dana R Fisher et al., in process). In any city there is a dynamic array of institutional dynamics coupled with differing opinions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. The emergence of community-based urban stewardship organizations and their sociopolitical interactions with larger urban planning and natural resource management structures is the primary subject of this study. How do environmental stewardship groups emerge as leaders in the field of urban park and open space planning? How might the emergence of stewardship groups explain the relationship

between civic groups and government authorities as a new form of environmental governance?

Ecological Modernization, Discourse and the Post-1980s Environmental Movement

A review of the literature finds that ecological modernization theorists have written extensively over the past two decades on the ways in which technology, design and public policies can be used to improve environmental quality (Mol & Buttel, 2002; Mol, Sonnenfeld, & Spaargaren, 2009; A. P. J. Mol & G. Spaargaren, 2000; Mol & Spaargaren, 2006). Ecological modernization theory deals primarily with environmental protection or what has been described as “persistent environmental problems”(Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009). These problems are universal and include climate change, the loss of biodiversity, soil and water contamination, hazardous chemicals, diseases, and urban sprawl and land use change. While earlier versions of ecological modernization theory emphasized changes in technology and state regulation, recent discussions focus on how social actors are responding to changing systems of beliefs.

In summarizing recent writing, Mol (2000) writes that shifts in the ecological movement are attributed to new uses of technology, the importance of global markets, the role of the state or, the rise of ‘sub politics’ (Beck, 1997), and a new environmental discourse that favors solutions rather than constraints to environmental problems. While the linchpin of ecological modernization is the use of technology, public policy and governing structures also provide a critical context for that technological innovation (Dana R. Fisher & Freudenburg, 2001; Milanez & Bührs, 2007).

Scholars have also made the case that ecological modernization is not simply a technological fix to environmental problems (Hajer, 1996). Changes in environmental

discourse have reshaped the radical environmental critique of the 1970s to one that values and considers voluntary agreements, citizen voters, consumer preferences and organizational memberships (Glasbergen, 1998; Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009). Of particular interest to ecological modernists is how this changing system of beliefs has affected the nature of social movements (Dana R Fisher, Fritsch, & Andersen, 2009; Hajer, 1996, 1997; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Sonnenfeld & Mol, 2002). In this sense, ecological modernization is shaped as much by social forces as it is dependent upon technology.

Institutional arrangements and social actors have significantly altered policy-based approaches to environmental degradation as well as the ideology, structure and networks of civic environmental organizations. As a result, non-governmental groups are playing a larger role since the 1970s in agenda setting within the policy domain and setting international environmental protocols (Rothschild & Stephenson, 2009; Sonnenfeld & Mol, 2002). At the international and national scale, environmental organizations founded in the 1990s, and thereafter, differ from older groups in that they have grown independent of a broader environmental movement, engage in complex matters of state regulation and are less resistant to market-based strategies (Mol, 2000). This change corresponds with trends in civic environmentalism whereby organizations develop in response to a wide range of socio-cultural desires, environmental conditions, perceived risks and economic opportunities (Beck, 1995, 1997; Evans, 2002; A. P. Mol & G. Spaargaren, 2000). In this account, environmental nonprofit organizations have begun to assume traditional roles of the state such as education, extension and information dissemination.

Ecological Modernization and Environmental Governance

Governance is used as a broad term to suggest governing arrangements between the state, non-governmental actors, and individual citizens and those institutions that shape the vested interests of other organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

Collaborative governance is defined as a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engages non-state stakeholders to determine rules, laws and administrative procedures through formal and collaborative decision-making processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Different types of social arrangements tend to arise as societies advance notions of self-governance and coordination (Hirst, 2000). Shifting roles of government are associated with a “hollowing out of the state” where non-governmental organizations and businesses have become actors in urban regimes, playing a critical role in resource allocation, land use and governing structures (Jessop, 1995). Others have referred to non-state coalitions as the “shadow state” (Wolch, 1990) where non-governmental sectors act outside traditional democratic processes and assume responsibilities of the state. Alternatively, Harry Boyte argues that the shift from government to governance holds real promise for reframing democracy. He writes,

The shift involves a move from citizens as simply voters, volunteers, and consumers to citizens as problems solvers and co-creators of public goods; from public leaders, such as public affairs professionals and politicians to providers of services and solutions to partners, educators, and organizers of citizen action; and from democracy as elections to democratic society (Boyte, 2005).

The notion of governance as a dynamic process is thought to be important for the study of highly localized projects where civic and state actors come together through shared interests to create formal rules over a public resource. A further understanding of civil society and the state is considered an important contribution to ecological

modernization theory as recent discussions call for the inclusion of civil society actors as part of the state-society relationship (Fischer, 2000a, 2000b; Fischer & Hajer, 1999; Dana R Fisher et al., 2009; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Mol, 2000). As highly developed and urbanized societies experience later forms of modernization, ecological modernists have begun to incorporate a theoretical discussion of deliberative democracy (J. Cohen, 1998; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Tatenhove & Leroy, 2003; Warren, 1999). Distinct from hierarchical governance models, deliberative democracy is shaped by public discussions, stories, and common practices and shared meaning. It is part of the interpretive understanding that people express in their daily lives (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Pierre, 2000; Tatenhove & Leroy, 2003).

New civic engagement models, public reasoning and collective learning have led to shifting roles and positions of the state, market and civil society. In light of new environmental decision-making networks, van Tatenhove and Leroy (2009) find there has been an institutionalization of “interference zones,” or particular spaces within the political domain where the meaning and nature of public participation, state rule making and market influences are reconfigured.

Civil society no longer seems as something separate from the state or that can be governed by it. Instead, the subsystems of civil society and market and their respective agencies are now conceptualized in terms of ‘networks,’ ‘associations,’ ‘public-private partnership’ and the like, in which the state negotiates with non-state agencies, either from the market or society, in order to formulate and implement an effective and legitimate policy (van Tatenhove and Leroy 2000:199).

Ecological modernization theory has historically focused on the relationship between the state and market yet the notion of how civil society becomes part of governing frameworks at the sub-national level is of great interest to social movements as well as public policy (Dana R Fisher et al., 2009; Sonnenfeld & Mol, 2002).

The Participation Debate

Social actors at the international, national and sub-national level engage in dynamic processes of coalition building on behalf of the environment, there are rapid changes in terms of opponents and partners (Mol 2000). Different arrangements are made based upon varied interpretations of risk and environmental consumption. As a theory, ecological modernization may give rise to practical solutions that are problematic in terms of favoring the private sector and efficiency models over other forms of participation (Christoff, 1996). Traditional ecological modernization theory emphasizes the role of the private sector in solving environmental problems without full analysis of the consequence of weakening participation and democratic forms of government. Christoff (2009, 1996) proposes that as a political program ecological modernization should be assessed as 'weak' or 'strong' versions that depend upon whether or not the impetus for collaboration is economic or ecological, technocratic or institutional, instrumental or communicative, national or international.

Further debates over environmental governance within the ecological modernization literature have centered on weighing the outcomes of participatory processes against traditional forms of governance (Dana R Fisher et al., 2009; Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009; Tatenhove & Leroy, 2003). As governance is no longer synonymous with statecraft, private entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may be co-opted or even coerced by the state as an alternative or replacement for direct government action (Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009). One of the concerns over the shift from government to governance is that the primary governing body over societal issues is not readily apparent. As a result, environmental protection measures and related mechanisms are weakened

when private sector efficiency supersedes public participation or as certain NGOs begin to dominate public decision-making (Coglianese, 1997, 1999; Milward & Provan, 2000; Rhodes, 1996, 2000).

Collaborative Governance and the Environment

This study departs from earlier versions of ecological modernization arguing that in the case of the local environment, an emergent civic society, rather than national environmental NGOs and private corporations, play a critical role in shaping the structures of governance. While few would argue that the role of government has effectively been diminished, it has changed its function and form in response to a dynamic civil society. For example, in the field of environmental governance the state has been found to be an active participant in reshaping its role and that of civil society through participatory planning processes (Sirianni, 2006, 2009).

In the 20th Century, efforts to involve the public in policy-making began in fits and starts during the 1930's New Deal economic programs and later in 1960's urban poverty program, most notably Model Cities created by the Democratic Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 and the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969. While language in these acts extended citizens a greater role in decision-making, the result was initially tepid (Stenberg, 1972). In the early 1990s, concerns over "grass-roots" or local, citizen engagement were addressed by federal agencies as they adopted more expansive measures to ensure public participation (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Recent studies have begun to look at environmentalism and the rise of civic sector organizations and social movement activity at the local level in the United States. These studies have found that local civic groups are engaging more substantively with

government representatives and in many cases, they are leading the course of decision-making and beginning to change organizational structures (Andrews & Edwards, 2005; Brulle, Turner, Carmichael, & Jenkins, 2007; S. Cohen, 2004; Corburn, 2005; Sirianni & Friedland, 2001; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008; E. P. Weber, 2000).

The prevalence of collaborative governance is attributed to instances where civil society has successfully pursued progressive approaches to planning, environmental management and economic development (Gibbs & Jonas, 2000; Healey, 1996; Innes & Booher, 1999; Innes & Booher, 1999; Rhodes, 1996, 2000; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). At the same time, an increase in local environmental stewardship groups since the 1980s (Straughan & Pollak, 2008) suggests that civic and state actors are working together in ways that go beyond the definitions of public-private partnerships that emphasize leveraging and informal agreements, giving rise to a new framework of formal environmental governance (Ansell, 2003; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Boyte, 2005; Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009; Pierre, 2000). Case studies of environmental governance reveal a range of institutional arrangements between civil society and government including the state as both an actor and institution, state-led community collaborations, civic-led initiatives and those efforts facilitated by coalition groups and alliances, and other emerging forms of governance structures.

Collaborations vary depending upon prior organizational histories of conflict or compromise, stakeholder incentives, resource imbalances, leadership and organizational structure (Ansell, 2003; Ansell & Gash, 2008). Collaborative governance has been studied from the perspective of grass-roots groups (E. P. Weber, 2003), participatory natural resource management (Vira & Jeffery, 2001), partnership (Leach, Pelkey, &

Sabatier, 2002) and co-management (Singleton, 2000). Over time, there has been a noticeable evolution from formal, command-and-control government procedures and debates over deregulation to instances of collaborative governance of natural resources in the United States (T. M. Koontz et al., 2004). This type of governance is distinct from policy networks or networked governance as the latter are assumed to be informal rather than formal rule-making entities (B. Taylor, 2009).

Key factors that influence shared or collaborative governance include whether an issue is defined as transboundary or limited in scope, the amount of resources available for collaboration and group structure and decision-making processes (Hirst, 2000; T. M. Koontz et al., 2004). Others have found evidence of important differences in policy outcomes that are dependent upon the positioning of civic groups as external to or working in collaboration with government agencies (Dryzek, Downes, Hundold, Schlosberg, & Hernes, 2003). Similar to cases of ecological modernization and shifts in the international and national ecological movement, sub-national and local environmental organizations are working among a much broader set of partners and exchange of ideas.

The debate over environmental governance models continues as outcomes vary and are dependent upon geography, social norms and discourse, local economies, management scale, and natural resource properties (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; T. M. Koontz et al., 2004; Tomas M. Koontz & Thomas, 2006; Ostrom, 1999; Pierre, 2000). Fischer (2000) notes that, over time civic groups have developed a type of “counter-expertise” in response to the technocratic bureaucrat. In response to the state, environmental stewardship groups tend to integrate traditional social movement tactics with expertise in education, self-help and community capacity-building through

participation in collaborative, locally based resource management and restoration activities (W. R. Burch, Jr. & Grove, 1993; Ernstson, Sörlin, & Elmqvist, 2008; Evans, 2002; Shutkin, 2000; Sirianni, 2007; Sirianni & Friedland, 2005).

One of the primary ways to strengthen integration between civil society and the state is through building flexible and creative forms of public problem solving. Ideally, this type of open, mediated problem solving is intended to transform government officials from technocrats to sympathetic experts when dealing with urban planning issues and community-based concerns. No longer is the active citizen viewed as parochial or antagonistic but rather someone who seeks to build trust between government representatives and among civic organizations in pursuit of a shared vision. The reality is perhaps somewhere in between, as environmental governance is comprised of a complex web of state and non-state actors interacting at different levels of policy and at varying spatial and temporal scales.

Urban Environmental Stewardship Organizations

In the urban environment, civic groups have responded to public problems by seeking to work along with and outside of government agencies. Environmental civic groups have had a long history of being active in American cities and towns. The social history of these groups has been studied in terms of urban parks (Cranz, 1982; Cranz & Boland, 2004; Rosenzweig, 1992), urban gardens (Lawson, 2005), public health (Duffy, 1968), environmental justice (R. Bullard, 2005; R. D. Bullard, 1993; S. Campbell, 1996; Dorceta E Taylor, 1999; D. E. Taylor, 2009) and political influence (Schlosberg, 1999; Scobey, 2003). In fact, the political strategies and social organization used to develop the first urban, landscaped parks inspired the early American conversation movement

(Rosenzweig, 1992). National conservation leaders such as John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt adapted narratives and tactics of the urban park elite to gain public support for places such as Yosemite Valley and the Hudson River Palisades (Rosenzweig, 1992; Dorceta E Taylor, 1999).

In the United States, the concept of ‘place’ has become an important catalyst for self-governance creating momentum and legitimacy critical for the success of grass-roots organizations and alliances (Shutkin, 2000; Sirianni & Friedland, 2001; E. P. Weber, 2003). As the number and diversity of local environmental groups begins to rise, national organizations may lose their effectiveness to engage in local urban planning processes and decision-making (Andrews & Edwards, 2005; Brulle, 2000; Moore & Koontz, 2003). Thus, the importance of gaining a greater understanding of environmental governance cannot be understated (Brulle, 2000; Brulle et al., 2007; Carmin, 1999).

In documenting recent civic innovation in the United States, Sirianni and Friedland (2001) suggest that the characteristics of a new civic environmentalism are best defined by collaboration among various communities, interest groups and government agencies through deliberation over relative risks and common values. These groups have been found to differ with regard to degrees of professionalization. Some urban environmental groups are highly professionalized with a paid, full-time staff and annual budget such as the Central Park Conservancy or Prospect Park Alliance and others are voluntary associations, such as community garden groups, that are dependent upon ‘sweat equity’ and modest program budgets (Dana R Fisher et al., in process).

As researchers studying local environmental groups have revealed, “groups in existence for over one hundred years find themselves in competition with neighborhood

activists with little or no prior involvement in politics or social movements” (Andrews & Edwards, 2005:214). Institutions influence political actors often creating opportunities and barriers that shape social preferences (Fischer, 2003). Groups “help, hinder or block” other groups from achieving goals as they create the political and organizational context for decision-making frameworks (Hall, 1993; Hall & Taylor, 1996). Competition between older and newly established stewardship groups may create unexpected conflicts within the realm of environmental planning.

In contrast to earlier forms of ecological modernization that emphasize the role of the state and markets in environmental policy, local environmental stewardship in the United States tends to be initiated by any combination of government agencies and civic actors who, in turn, devise ways to engage with the private business sector. This is meant to suggest that market forces are a factor in developing programs and policies. But rather, the market is an often unseen but ever-present structural force in most civic and state collaborations (Perkins, 2009).

As part of the study of contemporary urban parks and stewardship processes, there is growing empirical evidence that local and professional environmental knowledge can be successfully intertwined with state-driven management processes (Andrews & Edwards, 2005; Sirianni & Friedland, 2001; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008; Wilkinson, Clark, & Burch, 2007). Urban environmental groups, in particular, shape politics and planning as they are increasingly recognized for their role in determining the location and quality of land use (Pincetl, 2003; Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009). In Stockholm, Sweden, local park advocates self-organized into trust-building networks across multiple sectors to create an entirely new municipal organization to serve as a bridge between the state and civil society

(Olsson, Folke, & Hahn, 2004). Scholars have found that diverse groups of civil society organizations have successfully used discursive narratives to express and shape urban environmental policy (Ernstson & Sörlin, 2009; Hajer, 1996, 1997). In this sense, civic groups are making moral claims of responsibility and accountability similar to those used to establish government legitimacy (B. Taylor, 2009). Some urban parks groups have even learned to function more like urban business regimes than single-issue environmental advocates (Pincetl, 2003). A number of urban environmental groups remain active in advocacy campaigns, participatory park design (Calthorpe, 1993) and what has been termed by (Carmin & Balsler, 2002) as ‘bucket brigades’ of volunteers to plant trees and clean shorelines. However, a growing number of urban environmental actors have become more involved in policy and decision-making through collaborative governing structures over watershed areas, rivers, bays, and forests (T. M. Koontz et al., 2004; Salazar, 1996).

D. Taylor (2009) has developed a typology of new civic park groups working in partnership with local government. These include volunteer *assistance providers* and *catalyst groups* that assist with basic needs for fundraising, design and construction, *co-managers* and *sole managers* such as conservancies and alliances with longer-term legal responsibilities over a specific park site and *city-wide partners* that support an overall issue or campaign.

Importance for Urban Planning

In discussing relationships between civic groups and the state, B. Taylor (2009) has written of a ‘glass ceiling’ where certain civic groups achieve success on a particular issue, but falter when they attempt to reframe it within larger policy concerns. At the same time, she argues that other groups meet a ‘grass floor’ where even the most legitimized

organizations are stymied by a fractured civic landscape. In either case, local urban planners have come to rely on these groups for labor and for leveraging resources.

The need to assess models of environmental governance is critical to developing social organizational remedies to persistent ecological problems and the provision of public services. This understanding is also critical to urban planners as they interact with levels of governance in pursuit of achieving a greater balance between social and economic benefits. A study of urban environmental stewardship groups offers a new perspective that can deepen our understanding of the role that local civil society plays in the growing field of environmental governance. As such, this study seeks to understand urban planning processes, noting how certain groups and alliances become leaders amongst a dense population of civic environmental organizations, government agencies and market forces.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

This study seeks to understand contemporary urban stewardship arrangements as a form of governance by assessing the ways in which civic and state actors engage in urban environmental planning processes. These processes will be explored in open space projects in three New York City neighborhoods during the same time frame and political-economic context. The intent is to determine how contemporary civil society groups emerge as leaders in the field of urban environmental planning and how this might affect the relationship between civic groups and government authorities in shaping a new form of environmental governance.

A Historical Case for Studying Neighborhood Park Sites

Many early parks were private spaces serving the needs of wealthy urban property owners. While the wealthy enjoyed the use of private park-like estates, courtyard squares, gardens, and even hunting and racing grounds, the urban working class used tenement alleys, public sidewalks and streets as public parks and playgrounds. The idea of a public park was popularized in 19th Century New York City as a democratizing space where the working class could enjoy the benefits of fresh air and adopt cultural behaviors favored by the middle class (Fein, 1972, 1981).

Although there are interpretive differences over the meaning of ‘nature,’ Fredrick Law Olmsted hailed the development of urban parks as similar to that of preserving great areas of the American wilderness. Regardless of location, Olmsted viewed parks as fundamental to strengthening the principles of democracy. During his tenure as the Superintendent of Central Park, Olmsted became an embattled supporter of working class

access to the park and cites his on-going battles with the ‘Park Board’ as a failed democratic experiment and as one of his greatest sorrows (Olmsted, 1870).

In her history of urban environmental justice, D. Taylor makes that claim that the 21st Century urban parks era differs significantly from the 19th Century in that the latter was not brought about through a mass movement. For example, ‘The Minturn Circle’ was a group of reform-oriented, urban business elites who gathered, in part, to reap financial benefits from a major public park in New York City as it would improve the value of their adjacent properties while creating a cultured amenity on par with European parks and civic attractions. Led by influential New York banker Robert Brown Minturn, D. Taylor suggests, “The Minturn Circle effectively changed the debate from *whether* a large landscaped park should be built to *where* such a park should be built” (D. E. Taylor, 2009).

Despite a stated intention to benefit the poor, the location of Central Park was not easily accessible to many working class communities in 19th Century New York City (Rosenzweig, 1992). In fact, in order to construct the park, hundreds of homes and working class establishments were removed from the site. In this sense, development was viewed by as an early form of rezoning, whereby the elite could eliminate nuisances and establish their own urban enclaves (Dorceta E Taylor, 1999; D. E. Taylor, 2009).

These early park advocates, such as those in the Minturn’s Circle, had extensive social networks that gave them influence within the Office of the Mayor, banks, newspapers, and churches. The Central Park Board of Commissioners (aka the ‘Park Board’) became a powerful authority governing the use of public funds. In fact, the Park Board has been described as an institutional arrangement that mimicked the function of

government, as local rules of law and governance were debated and decided upon within its structure (Foglesong, 1986).

Over the course of the 20th Century, the working class became effective at framing messages and using the media to create the type of compelling narratives that could pivot policy and redirect resources to construct public parks in other communities. An example of working class involvement has been the rise in the number of ‘friends of parks’ groups in middle class and low income communities (STEW-Map, 2008). A key turning point in the grass roots urban parks movement happened around the time of the 1970s fiscal crisis in New York City. In many parts of the city, neighborhood recreation facilities went unrepaired, public restrooms were locked and many parks were overgrown with weeds and litter. As a result, local residents avoided their local parks. The parks were considered unsafe as vandals; drug dealers and other negative elements filled the physical spaces abandoned by local communities and government authorities (Freeman, 2000).

The urban park elite living near Central Park responded to the crisis by using private capital to restore the park. Since the founding of the Central Park Conservancy in 1980, the non-profit has invested \$500 million into the restoration and maintenance of Central Park. The Conservancy is considered to be the ‘gold standard’ of urban park partnerships as \$390 million of this investment has been raised from the private sector (interview with Pullman 2009).¹ The Central Park Conservancy has served to inspire similar initiatives in New York City such as the Prospect Park Alliance, the Hudson River Park and the High Line Park in New York City (interviews with Diehl 2007; Hoover 2007). As of January 2009, urban park advocates claim that New York City has

¹ For a complete list of interviews, please see page 175.

more than forty private park conservancies operating in support of parks. These conservancies are said to spend \$87 million in private contributions on the maintenance of New York City parkland (Gentile, 2009). As other cities suffered similar devastation to public parks, the notion of privatizing these spaces or at least partnering with the private sector to restore them through membership donations, volunteer labor and income generating schemes has become a widely acceptable strategy for many parks departments and civic associations around the country.

While the Central Park Conservancy is a popular model of public-private partnership emerging from the 1970s fiscal crisis, local neighborhood parks and open spaces throughout the New York City were improved by largely unsung efforts of small groups of neighbors and friends, block associations, and social service organizations. Organized to ‘take back their parks,’ individuals and organizations from around the city have become involved in local environmental improvements (interview with Steele 2007). Today, local acts of stewardship continue to serve a critical role in supporting public parks and the environment as decades of budget cuts have left the department with roughly the same number of full-time staff as it had in the 1970s (City of New York, 2010b). However, few local neighborhood stewardship groups are comparable to the professionalized nature, budget and staff of organizations such as the Central Park Conservancy (D. Taylor 2009).

New York City Civic Stewardship as a Form of Governance

Since the 1980s, the NYC Parks property portfolio has grown steadily from 24,529 acres to 29,000 acres of parkland or 14% of the City of New York’s land holdings (City of New York, 2010b). As the second largest public landholder in the City of New

York, the Parks Department manages 1,7000 properties that range in size from over 2,000 acres to 0.001 acre (City of New York, 2010a). However, this growth and diversity can be burdensome without adequate staff or funding to maintain the city's parkland.

According to a leading park advocacy group, the Department of Parks and Recreation receives less than 0.5% of the city's budget which necessitates the need for supplemental private funding in order to adequately maintain the parks (Leichner, 2010). A long-time NYC Parks urban planner described current efforts to restore the budget as hopeful but not sufficient to overcome decades of limited funding.

So even though Mayor Bloomberg has put an enormous amount of new resources into parks, particularly around the expansion and renovations of the park system, -- historically, the public resources that we have to maintain the parks is at its lowest level (interview with Pullman 2009).

In terms of providing direct support, new and existing urban parks, new market-based funding mechanisms are being deployed by New York City park managers in addition to traditional modes of private philanthropy and public tax dollars. These financing mechanisms, which include special tax districts and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS), have created new dimensions to funding urban parks. Still, financing mechanisms are tools used within context of public-private partnerships that can be viewed as elitist. The work of these organizations tends to benefit particular areas of the city which presents a constant challenge to urban governance (Leichner, 2010).

Using data collected from the Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP), it can be determined that in 2007 there were at least 2,500 active civic organizations dedicated to conserving, managing, monitoring, advocating for, or educating their friends, neighbors, or public officials about the local, urban environment in New York City (Dana R Fisher et al., in process). Figure 2-1 is a citywide map of the

density of civic stewardship organizations active in New York City in or before 2007. Many of these organizations are similar to those in other cities where civic-led groups are working on neighborhood sites ranging from pocket parks, waterfronts, gardens, greenways, courtyards, streetscapes, and afforested and reforested lands (Svendsen & Campbell, 2008). A subset of the New York City-based open space projects and organizations are used as the base analysis for this study in order to understand how organizations establish themselves as civic leaders and interact with local government.

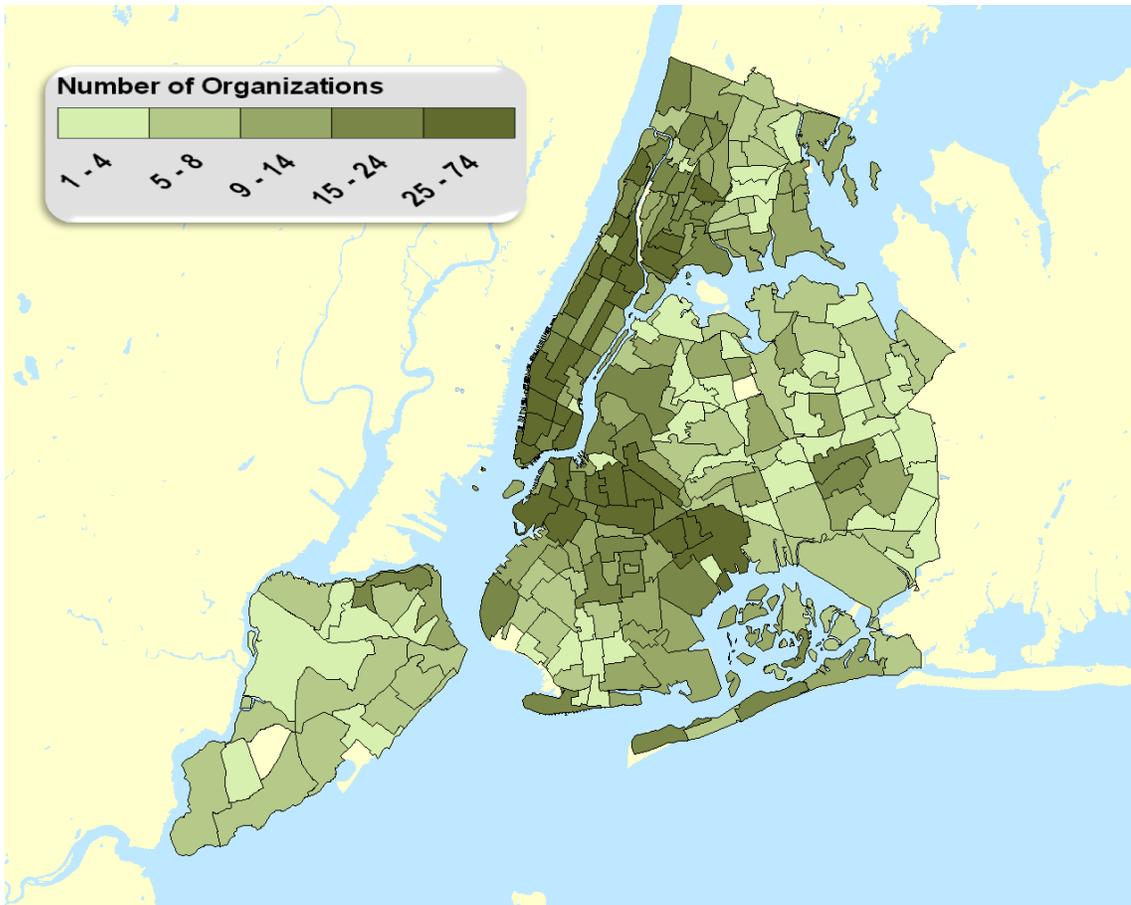


Figure 2-1 New York City Civic Stewardship Organizations summarized by Neighborhood: Group Density. Data Source: STEW-Map, U.S. Forest Service. Unpublished. May 2008.

While the effectiveness and overall outcomes of local community efforts have not been assessed fully, the proliferation of these groups is thought to represent an advance in

participatory urban environmental planning. These types of groups often create diverse networks of affiliation that become the “cause, context and consequence of civic engagement” (Fine & Harrington, 2004). In particular, urban greenways, large parks and public promenades are transboundary and as such, have become associated with neighborhood planning processes that can help mobilize civic actors and lead to collaborations with local government (Hoover & Shannon, 1995).

This reinforces an understated but critical aspect of civic stewardship that is a tangible project often aids in developing new local governing structures. This has certainly been the case in other time periods and parts of the country. For example, the Appalachian Trail was more than simply a regional exercise in trail building but instead triggered a much larger process of land protection measures, stewardship and democratic practices (W. R. Burch, 1974). In New York City, an area of dense population, cultural and economic diversity, and an active and historic civic stewardship, the question of how certain civic organizations emerge as leaders is complex, as there is a thick web of government authority and private interests governing the use of the public land. This type of complexity, coupled with a long history of public parks and open spaces, park advocacy, and management structures makes New York City a logical case for studying contemporary urban environmental stewardship.

Site Selection

The focus of this study is on three discrete linear park and open space projects along or near New York City’s waterfront communities in Brooklyn (Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway), the Bronx (South Bronx Greenway) and Manhattan (the High Line). Although not directly on the Hudson River waterfront, the High Line is

considered a waterfront project in that it is part of the larger redevelopment process taking place along the west side of Manhattan. This particular phase of redevelopment began along the waterfront and has expanded into adjacent neighborhoods along the west side.

All three projects include a linear design in terms of spatial form and can be considered transboundary as they cross multiple political or property jurisdictions. All three neighborhood sites are located in post-industrial, waterfront communities that have been zoned for residential and mixed use. In addition to site similarities, there are critical differences that allow for exploration of the study's theoretical framework (Pettigrew, 1973). Key differences include the physical design, property jurisdictions, neighborhood demographics and governing arrangements. Each site will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

A case comparative model is used to identify the presence or absence of conditions that cause certain civic groups to emerge as leaders and shape new forms of hybrid governance. Using theoretical rather than statistical reasons, site selection is based upon important similarities with regard to political-economic timeframes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In order to understand the processes and patterns that regulate local environmental planning and hybrid governance, each case examines public open space projects that have been initiated concurrently over the past decade by a combination of state and civic actors. In all three cases, civic actors made claims within the larger frame of state-led environmental planning which triggered some level of contention between groups.

Project Timelines

The focus of this study spans the course of two decades, from the 1990s-2000s. This time frame enables each case to be examined from the beginning of the planning process through the start of project construction. Public advocacy for each of the three projects began in the 1990s and coincides with the mayoral administrations of Rudolph Giuliani (1994-2001) and Michael R. Bloomberg (2002-Present). The New York City Department of City Planning identified the area around the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway as a priority route in the 1993 Greenway Master Plan. By 1998, citizen activists began advocating for an extended and enhanced bike and pedestrian path along the waterfront from Newtown Creek in Greenpoint to the Shore Parkway in Bay Ridge. Local environmental activist Majora Carter proposed the South Bronx Greenway in the late 1990s as she began her transition from a program associate at The Point Community Development Corporation to starting her own environmental non-profit called Sustainable South Bronx. While fanciful design ideas for converting elevated rail line know as the “High Line,” were proposed as early as the 1980s, the official campaign to save the railroad trestle and tracks from being torn down began in the late 1990s. Public advocacy and discourse occur during the same political time period as projects emerge during the end of the Rudolph Giuliani Mayoral Administration during the late 1990s into the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2002. A common political time frame is useful in examining interactions between local government and civic groups in different parts of the city.

Case 1: The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway

Spanning nearly 14 miles from the Newtown Creek in Greenpoint to the Shore Parkway in Bay Ridge, the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway is designed primarily as an off-street bike and walking path with rows of trees and shrubs planted as a buffer between the street and greenway (Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, 2007). Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3, shown below, illustrate the Northern and Southern sections of the greenway along with streets that are critical to its development such as Columbia Street and Van Brunt Street. The greenway crosses a number of public and private property jurisdictions in neighborhoods that include a mix of low to high-income households. Figure 2-4 illustrates the household income levels in neighborhood adjacent to the greenway. According to the 2000 Census, the average median income in neighborhoods along and around the greenway route is \$39,685 which tends to fall in the middle income range when compared with the rest of the City (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000).

What is distinct about the greenway is that it establishes public access to new waterfront redevelopment sites in Brooklyn while connecting to larger greenway trails in Brooklyn and Queens. A waterfront greenway was proposed by many local activists in the 1990s and nurtured by the Regional Plan Association, a regional planning group representing parts of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit in 2004, after its members had worked for several years with the Regional Plan Association and local groups to formalize a greenway plan.

Significant funding for the greenway has been provided by federal transportation funds. The primary public agency working in partnership with the greenway group is the

New York Department of Transportation. However, BGI also works with the State Department of the State, the State Department of Transportation, the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation and the Parks Department. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative serves as a liaison between government entities and local business owners with interests along the greenway route. These businesses include larger corporations such as IKEA and smaller, local firms such as dry cleaners, bars and restaurants.

Some of the more contentious issues have originated from conflicts between private property owners and civic groups with regard to the precise routing of the greenway. At the same time, tensions arose between local civic groups with regard to off-street routing and the planning process. The Department of Transportation has begun installing some elements of the greenway on and off-street. The agency is expected to complete a greenway master plan by 2011. There is no official final completion date given for the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway at this time.

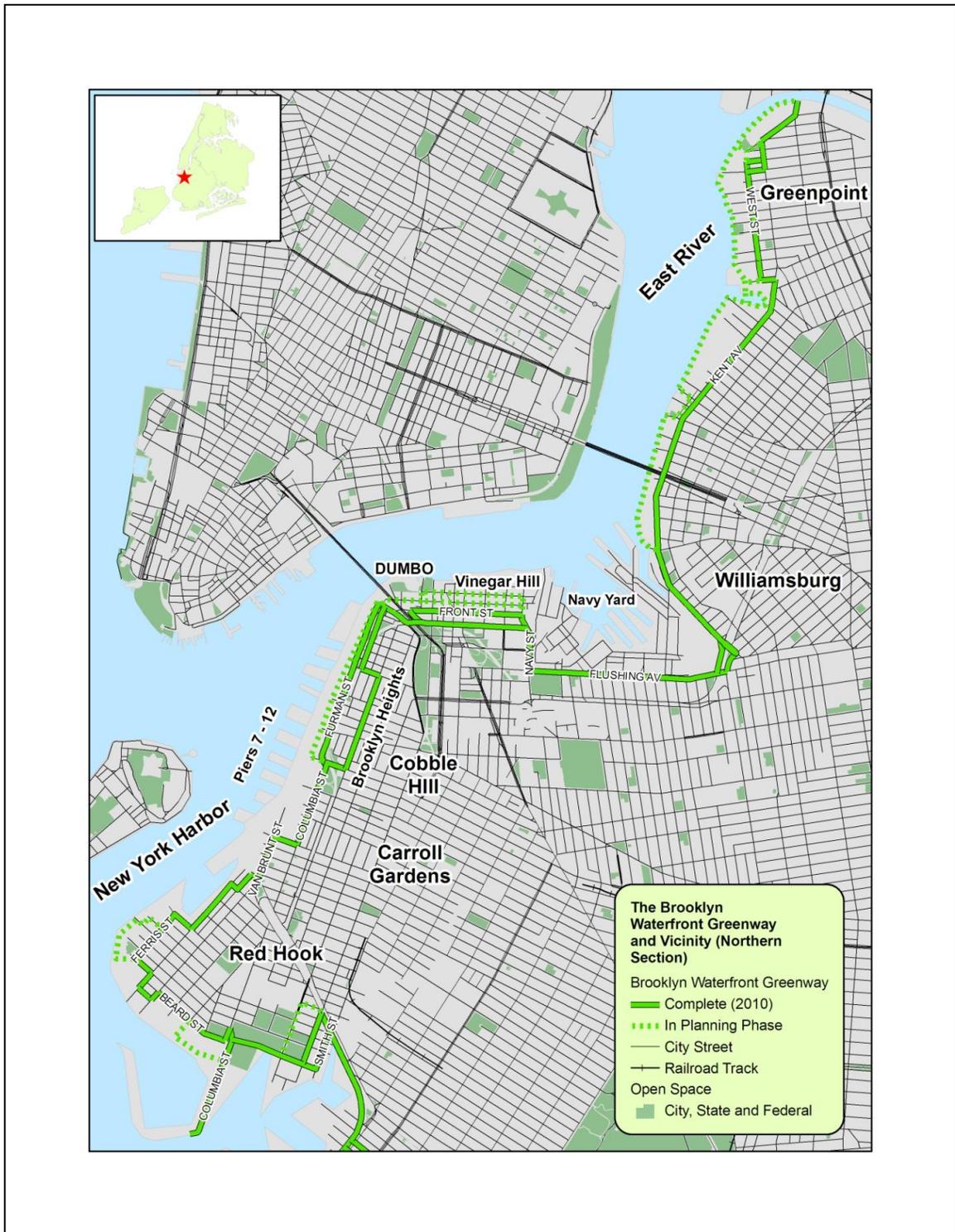


Figure 2-2 The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and Vicinity (Northern Section).

The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and Vicinity (Northern Section). [computer map]. 1:35,000. Unpublished, 2010. Using ArcGIS ArcInfo Version 9.3.1. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, 1992 – 2010.



Figure 2-3 The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and Vicinity (Southern Section).

The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and Vicinity (Southern Section). [computer map]. 1:35,000. Unpublished, 2010. Using ArcGIS ArcInfo Version 9.3.1. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, 1992 – 2010.

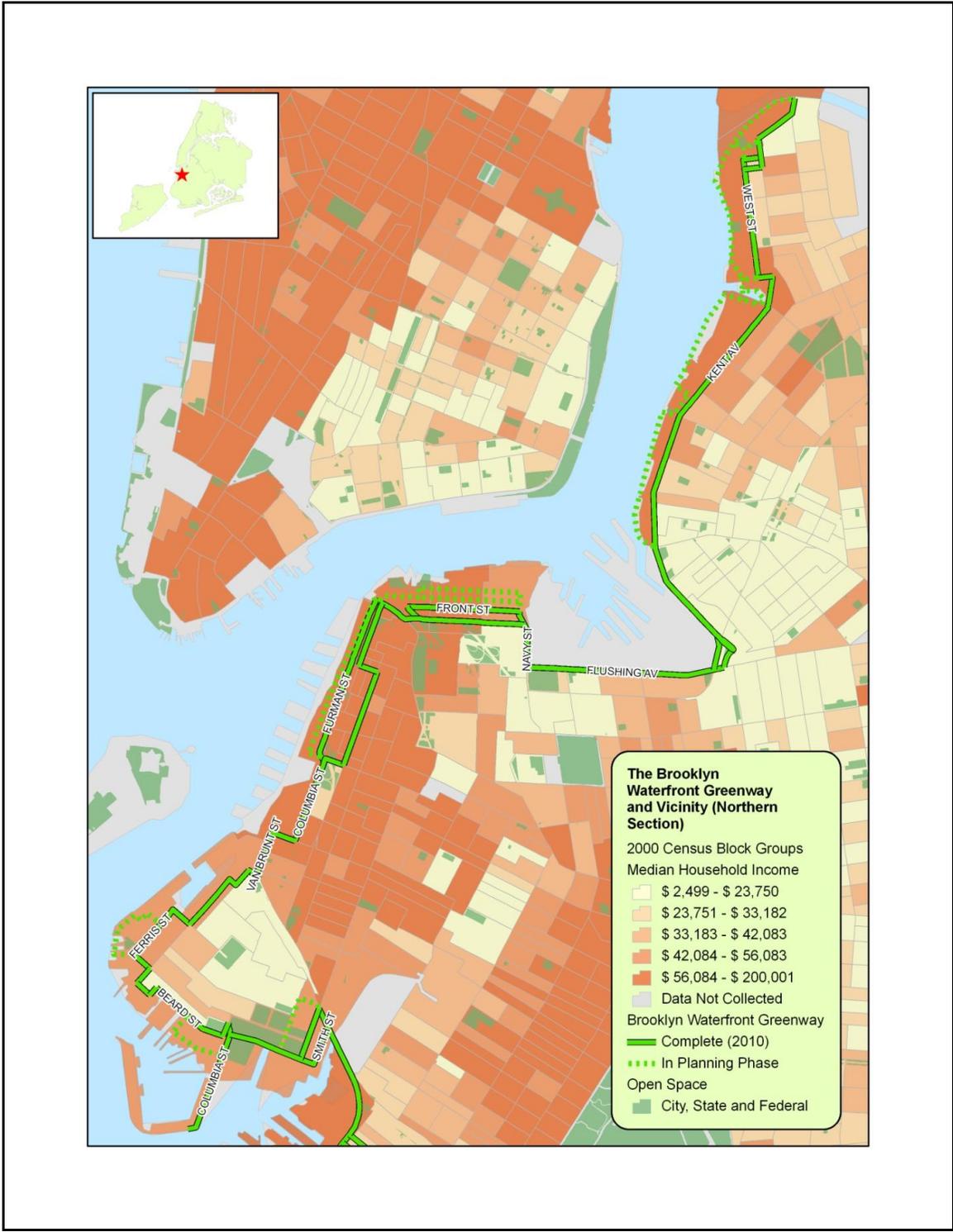


Figure 2-4 Median Household Income along the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and Vicinity (Northern Section).

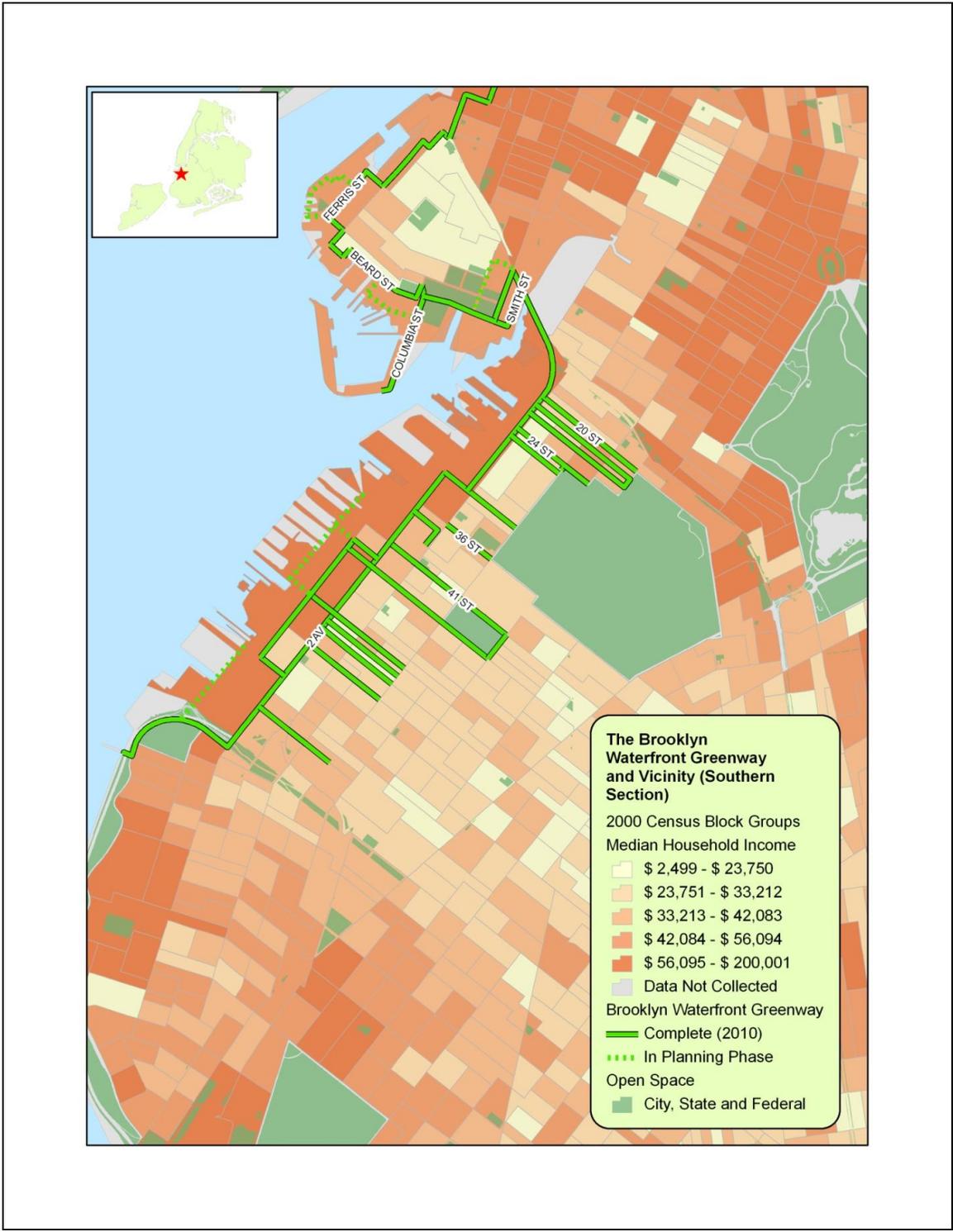


Figure 2-5 Median Household Income along the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and Vicinity (Southern Section).

Case 2: The High Line

Originally 13 miles long, the High Line was built in 1934 as an elevated freight line to transport goods safely through the west side of Manhattan. The southern section of the High Line was demolished in the 1960s and remaining portions remained active until 1980. Shortly after the last train ran on the track, local developers and property owners called for the entire line to be torn down (Casey Jones, 2002). Today, the High Line is an elaborately designed elevated park promenade rising nearly thirty feet above ground providing visitors with a clear view of the Hudson River. Figure 2-6 illustrates where the High Line is located geographically in relation to other neighborhoods. The undeveloped portion of the High Line is also noted on the map north of 34th Street. Site use is restricted to daylight hours and only passive activities are permitted (e.g. biking, running, or other active recreation is disallowed). The High Line community includes a mix of high and low-income residents with median income ranging from \$13,200 to \$81,464 according to the 2000 Census (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Figure 2-7 illustrates the dramatic differences in local income (see Figure 2-5)

Friends of the High Line (FHL) was established in 1999 and is credited with saving the remaining sections of the line from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District to 34th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues. While many public and private entities were involved in the design and construction phases, the High Line is considered a public park and is managed cooperatively by the Parks Department and Friends of the High Line. Other key government partnerships are with the Mayor's Office, the City Council, the Department of City Planning and the Economic Development Corporation. The project has significant financial support of New York City's elite community of

artists, entertainers and real estate developers which will be discussed in further detail in the case chapter.

Significant points of contention arose between those interested in saving the High Line from demolition and local property owners who claimed it stymied area business opportunities. There are other disputes with local civic groups over neighborhood priorities, funding and proposed improvement districts.

The first section of the line, from Gansevoort Street to 20th Street, was opened in June 2009. The second section will be completed by 2011. A third section that runs north of 30th Street through the West Side Rail Yards, also known as ‘the Spur,’ has been incorporated into redevelopment proposals associated with the West Side Rail Yards Redevelopment Plan. On July 29, 2010, the New York City Council voted to approve a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application to grant the City of New York permission to acquire this final section of the High Line. Once the ULURP application is approved by the community board and other government agencies, the City will proceed with permanent acquisition of the line.



Figure 2-6 The High Line and Vicinity
The Highline and Vicinity. [computer map]. 1:12,483. Unpublished, 2010. Using ArcGIS ArcInfo Version 9.3.1. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, 1992 – 2010.

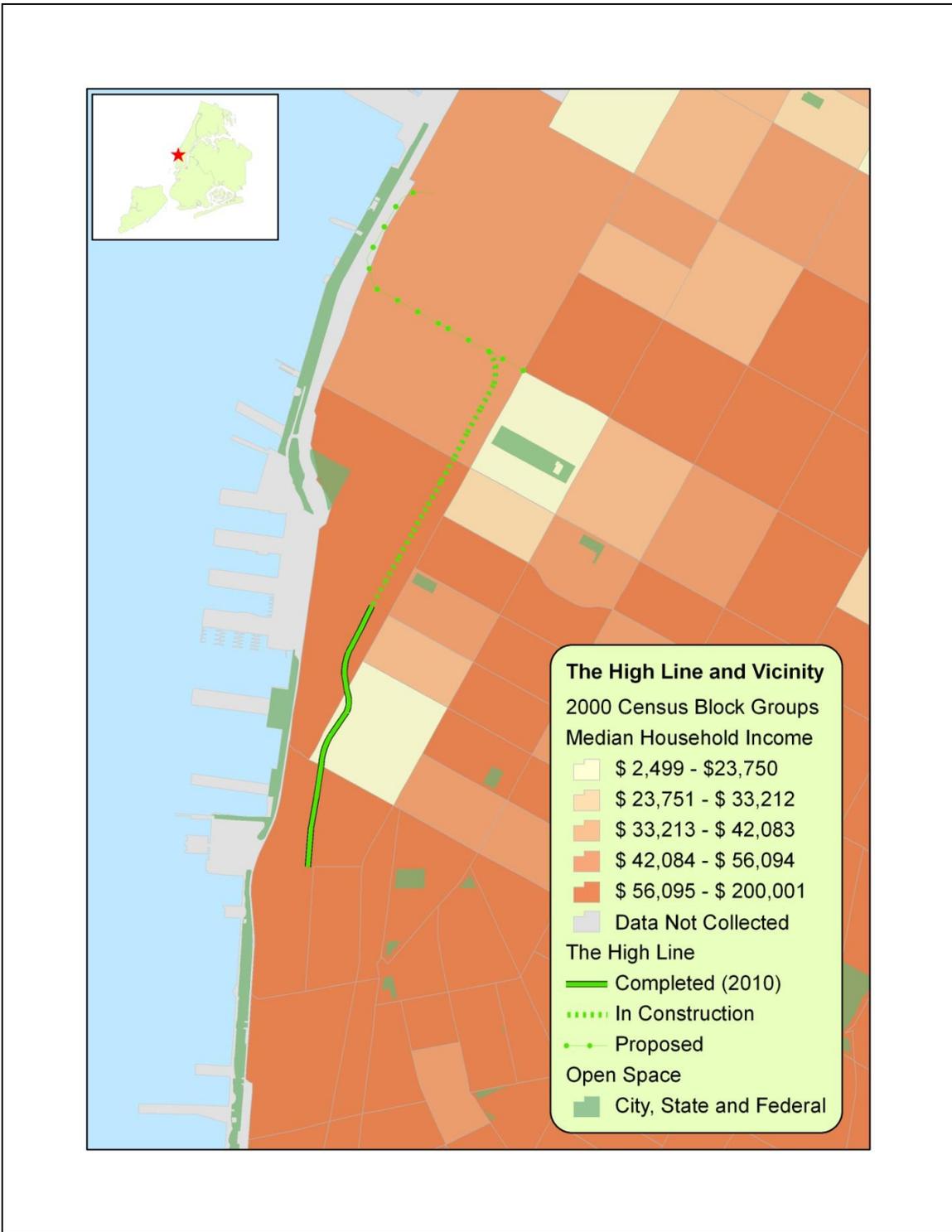


Figure 2-7 Median Household Income for the High Line and Vicinity

Case 3: The South Bronx Greenway

The South Bronx Greenway is circuitous off-street bike and walking path that winds around the Hunts Point Peninsula and into the residential and commercial districts of Hunts Point connecting the area to the northern Bronx as well as Randall's Island at its southern section. Figure 2-8 shows the planned route for the South Bronx Greenway including a connection to new redevelopment open space on nearby Randall's Island. The greenway features many non-standard designs requiring additional maintenance for features including grass paving systems, structural soils, earth berms, and bio-retention swales (NYC Economic Development Corporation, Sustainable South Bronx, & The Point 2006)

The South Bronx Greenway is situated, in part, along an industrialized waterfront and continues throughout commercial and residential streets in Hunts Point. Figure 2-9 shows that the area has the lowest income reported among the three cases with an estimated median household income of \$21,394 as reported by the 2000 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Recent changes to the greenway plan highlight ways to connect this low-income community with new parks and recreation facilities on Randall's Island. The overall design has path extensions into residential areas, which function like tributaries leading back to the main line along the waterfront. The greenway is intended to connect with the larger Bronx River Greenway that connects to the East Coast Greenway.

Under the initial coordination of, Sustainable South Bronx and The Point Community Development Corporation, both community development organizations in Hunts Point, the greenway was designed by Matthews Nielsen Landscape Architects with input from local residents. The design contract was managed by New York City

Economic Development Corporation as part of the city's master planning process for Hunts Point. Other groups participating in the design and implementation of the greenway include the Pratt Institute for Community and Economic Development, the Office of U.S. Congressman Jose Serrano, the Office of the Borough President and the Parks Department. While significant funding for the project comes from federal and city sources, private funding mechanisms intend to focus on the maintenance of the greenway by local stewards. The business community centered within the Hunts Point Market is viewed as a potential future source of support for the greenway. Construction of the first phase of the South Bronx Greenway has shifted over the years and was most recently scheduled to begin in May 2010.

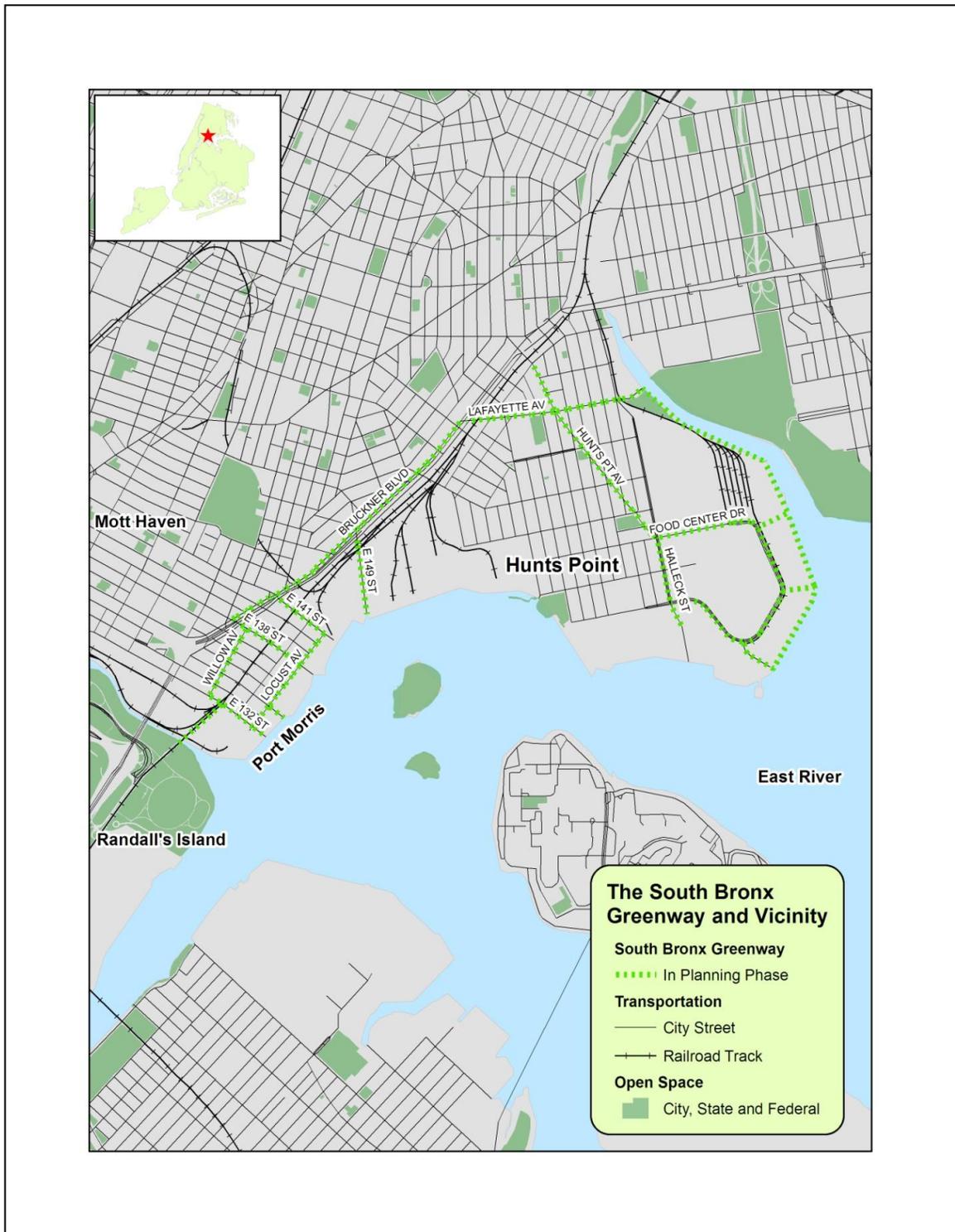


Figure 2-8 The South Bronx Greenway and Vicinity.
The South Bronx Greenway and Vicinity. [computer map]. 1:28,078. Unpublished, 2010. Using ArcGIS ArcInfo Version 9.3.1. Redlands, CA: Environmental Systems Research Institute, 1992 – 2010.

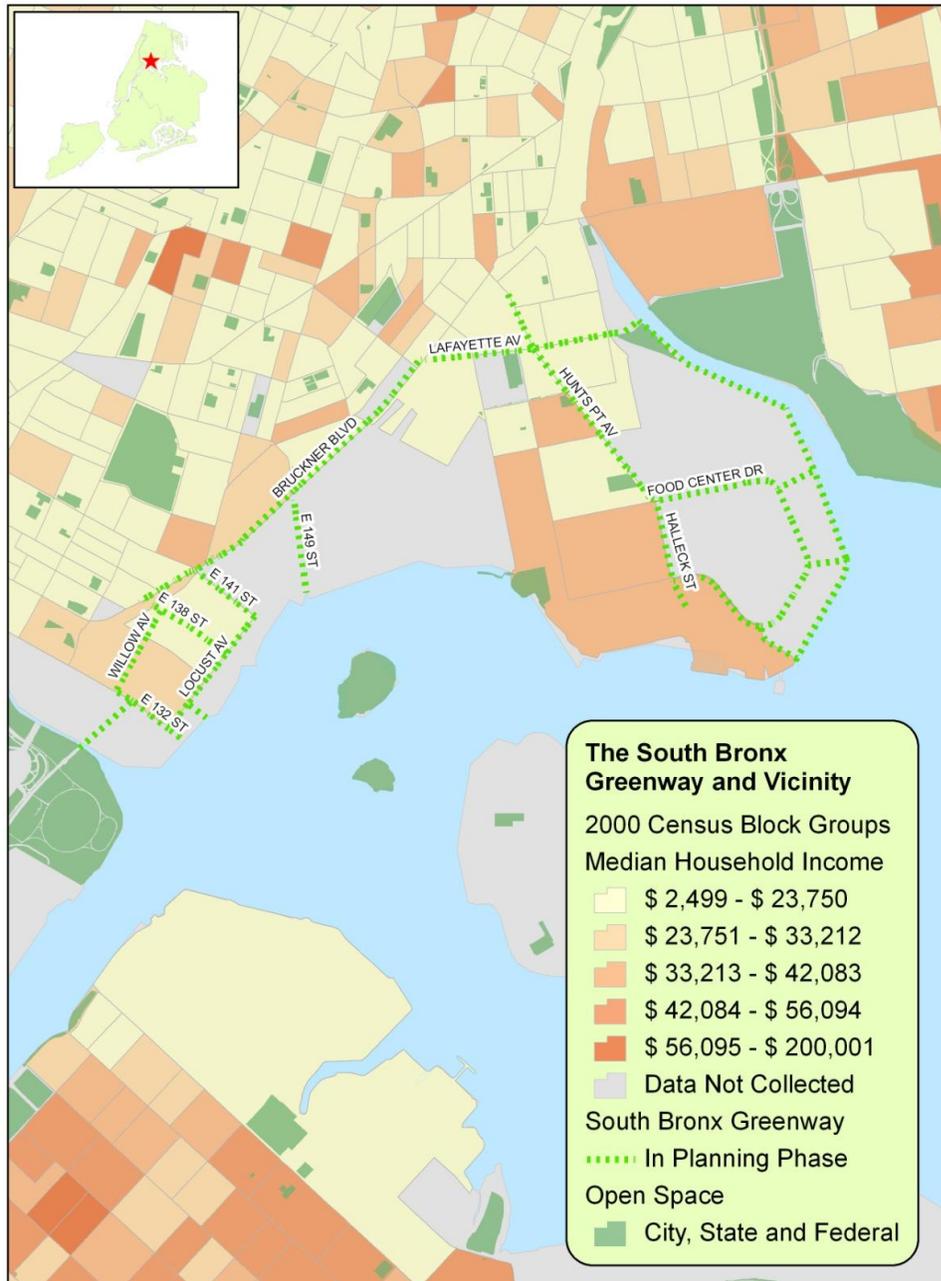


Figure 2-9 Median Household Income of the South Bronx Greenway and Vicinity.

Independent and Dependent Variables

Using a case study approach, the researcher can examine cross-case data in a variety of ways critical for in-depth comparisons (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988). This study utilizes two independent variables as a way to understand the nature and variation in collaborative environmental governance. The first variable is ‘*stewardship group*,’ which is defined as a civic, not-for-profit organization that conserves, monitors, manages, advocates for, or educates on behalf of the environment. Participation in these groups include traditional urban elites or the type of groups that (Scobey, 2003:11) identified in his landscape history of New York in the 19th Century: “genteel intellectuals and reformers, civic-minded business leaders, and real estate developers and boosters.” The participation of elites is often voluntary and on behalf of a civic-led organization. Also included within contemporary stewardship groups are local activists, homeowners, lifestyle enthusiasts and concerned citizens. As such, stewardship groups are considered to be a part of civil society that is defined as a social sphere independent and separate from state and economic actors (Baldassarri & Diani, 2007; J. L. Cohen & Arato, 1994; Diani, 2003; Emirbayer & Sheller, 1999).

In this case, the type of stewardship group is determined by its relationship to traditional networks of the urban elite (D. Taylor 2009), its “grass-roots” nature and highly localized group formation (E. P. Weber, 2003), or as an advocacy group whose goal is environmental justice (R. Bullard, 1990). A fundamental concern is what role civil society and government agencies play in the formation of urban environmental stewardship groups? How might civil society change through its association with the

state? How does the type of civic stewardship affect the nature of environmental governance?

The second variable is the ‘*level of contention*’ as civic actors make claims that compete with the interests of other social actors. In this case, civic, state and the private business sector are making claims on urban land use. This type of claim-making enters the realm of contentious politics and seeks to gain advantages over government (Tilly, 1998, 2002). The coordinated efforts or ‘repertoires’ of civic stewards are assessed as they develop into collective action and contentious interactions with the state and other actors. Drawing upon mechanisms and processes of contentious politics established by (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007), lead stewardship groups within each case have been assigned a level of contention ranging from low, moderate to high (see Table 2-1). The following categories were developed by the author and are groups by levels of contention that lead to different project outcomes.

Table 2-1: Levels of Contention among Stewardship Groups

<u>Levels of Contention</u>
Low: An expected and relatively minor skirmish between groups making a particular claim that impacts government policies and private concerns. Arguments for or against are often presented at community meetings, public hearings and through local news media. Critical to low levels of contention result and a compromise is reached quickly.
Medium: There is steady opposition to a particular policy or rule. The opposition actively seeks financial contributions, organizational support and develops campaign slogans. The dispute is eventually settled through mediation that often reveals an understanding of mutual dependence and incentives.
High: There is a high level of distrust between parties that is often part of a historical or lagged-effect from prior disagreements. While project development or policymaking may continue, fundamental arguments are sustained overtime despite an effort to mediate the issue. Lawsuits are threatened or filed. Tactics ranging from protests to lobbying are evident.

Contentious politics and competing claims of community groups and government entities are important to the positioning of local environmental governance. Several private foundation program officers voiced their concerns that much of current knowledge on urban environmental stewardship is often subjective and based upon compelling storylines that quickly become part of the public discourse. The consequence, according to these sources, is that certain groups are able to gain more public recognition, attracting more resources or access to government than other equally meritorious organizations (interview with Hoover 2007; Sampson 2007).

The dependent variables in this study are *project outcome* and *degree of hybrid governance* within the field of environmental planning and stewardship. Project outcome is described as the state of the project at the time of research. This includes any future planning as it is currently known. In order to describe hybrid governance, I will provide a brief explanation of other related forms of governance.

Environmental governance can originate from within civic organizations (civic-led), governmental agencies (state-led), or a combination of the two sectors (collaborative). Similar to 'environmental management,' it is a collaborative effort that is often used as a means to transcend political boundaries, address multi-stakeholder conflicts and create new solutions to old problems (Leach et al., 2002; Vira & Jeffery, 2001; E. P. Weber, 2003). Forms of environmental governance are closely related to environmental management as both recognize the importance of diverse interests and the integration of community-based knowledge into problem-solving models (T. M. Koontz et al., 2004; Tomas M. Koontz & Thomas, 2006). However, environmental governance is distinct from environmental management as the latter is not by definition a

collaborative effort. Some authors have sought to further separate public-private partnerships, management schemes and policy-networks from forms of governance as they are based upon leveraging resources in the short-term and tend to be informal arrangements. It has been argued that collaborative governance is a formalized arrangement between recognized authorities granted the responsibility to set and enforce local, regional, national or international rules of order making it distinct from other types of partnerships and collaborations (Ansell & Gash, 2008). At the same time, others interpret the rise in all arrangements that span state, market and civil society including public-private partnerships and co-management as the emergence of hybrid environmental governance modes (Lemos & Agrawal, 2006).

In this study, all forms of governance are assumed to be hybrid to some degree. However, it is important to recognize that hybrid governance involves two separate social actors (i.e. civic stewardship groups and local government agencies) who are joined as a result of co-dependencies or shared interests over a long-term or permanent project. For the purposes of this study, the market or private business sector is recognized as part of the overall context in which these social actors engage in urban planning activities. Hybrid governance puts a sharper point on the notion of collaboration as it acknowledges that civil society and the state were once discrete entities that are forever changed through their association. Hybrid governance can lead to the creation of a new organizational node or entity operating within a system of environmental governance. Within these hybrid decision-making structures, the role of the state and civil society often intertwine. In this case, organizational representatives often refer to this as ‘blurring of the lines’ between the private and public sector (interview with Wallace 2007). In the case of

hybrid governance, the lines of authority are sufficiently blurred to create an entirely new organization or governing structure.

For the purposes of this study, hybrid governance is measured by degree (see Table 2-2). A strong form of hybrid governance is best defined as a formal collaboration where each party has agreed to specific rules of decision-making. Each party has a relatively equal stake in the project outcome and is therefore, jointly accountable to each other. A moderate hybrid is defined as a partnership or collaboration that tends to be based upon an informal arrangement or social practice. Typically, each party is supportive of the other and there is a shared sense of responsibility. Finally, a weak form of hybrid governance can include participatory planning and design but will lack formality or structure to its decision-making. The role of each party is unclear and groups often pursue their own agendas within the larger project frame.

As relationships between groups evolve the degree of hybrid governance can change. For example, a weak collaboration can be strengthened over time and a strong collaboration can eventually dissolve. The hybrid governance matrix (see Table 2-3) suggests that the type of stewardship group combined with the level of contentious politics with the state will explain the emergence of different forms of hybrid governance. However, hybrid governance is used to describe the near final outcome of the project rather than its beginnings.

Table 2-2: Degree of Hybrid ‘Environmental’ Governance

<i>Degree of Hybrid Governance</i>
Weak: The precise stewardship role of each party is unclear. Groups follow separate agendas. Participatory planning and design exists but there is no formal mandate to structure or share decision-making. Funds tend not to be shared between groups. The resource belongs to everyone and no one at the same time.
Moderate: There is clear partnership and leveraging between groups that tends to be governed by an informal agreement. Groups function in supportive roles serving as advisors to each other. There is sense of a shared responsibility. Joint fundraising and goal-setting is common.
Strong: Each group shares an equal responsibility and accountability to the project. There is a formal agreement that specifies decision-making and shared financial resources.

Table 2-3: Hybrid Governance Matrix

<u>PROJECT</u>	IV: Type of Stewardship Group	IV: Level of Contention with the State	DV: Outcomes / Project Status	DV: Degree of Hybrid Governance
Brooklyn Greenway	<u>Professionalized Grassroots</u> (Civic-led; Mixed Income; Homeowners)		Some sections begun; DOT master plan due 2010; no final date for completion	
The High Line	<u>Urban Park Elite</u> (Civic-led; High Income)		Fully Realized Plan; Phase 1 of Park is Complete in 2009; Phase 2 started in 2010; City Acquiring Additional Rail Line Space	
South Bronx Greenway	<u>Environmental Activists</u> (Civic-led; Low Income, Long-time residents; Environmental Justice Narrative)		Enhanced Plan with a Randall’s Island Connection; First Phase Yet to be Completed; Proposed for May 2010	

Data Collection and Interview Techniques

Interviews were conducted with representatives from civil society groups and state agencies that are working directly to design, support, oppose, implement and manage linear park and greenway projects in the study areas. A natural ‘sphere of influence’ or socio-spatial area of governance for each project emerged during the interview process. A project timeline for each case was constructed through the compilation of varied news media (newspapers, newsletters, press releases and on-line data). In addition to media accounts, additional background data including public planning documents and neighborhood maps were used in preparing for each interview.

All interviews were conducted through ‘face-to-face interviews’ to ensure collection of the richest possible data, achieve familiarity with the setting and understand fully the actions and orientations of the respondents (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006). A method of ‘intensive interviewing’ was used. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were asked to direct conversation naturally during the course of the interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Lofland et al., 2006). Using a ‘snowball sampling approach,’ each interviewee was asked toward the end of the session to suggest other persons or organizations that should be questioned as part of this research. These individuals or organizations were contacted for an interview. This process continued until no *new* names were suggested to the researcher and no new information or phenomena were discussed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

A small amount of ‘informal interviewing’ also took place where questions were asked ‘in situ’ during the course of project events and activities (Lofland et al., 2006).

This type of informal interviewing took place at fund-raising events, project clean-ups and public tours attended by the researcher.

A total of forty-four interviews were conducted and digitally recorded during the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2009 (please see page 175 for a complete list of respondents). Two of the forty-four respondents were interviewed informally during an event. Data from another respondent was gathered by attending a public lecture. Data were collected in accordance with Columbia University policies on the research on Human Subjects (IRB# AAAC5613). Each respondent has been given a pseudonym to hide their personal identity; however the names of their actual organizations are listed in the text. All those interviewed were representatives of civic, state or private business organizations. Of those interviewed, some were from citywide or statewide organizations while others' area of expertise was unique to a particular neighborhood or project. Those representing city, state or regional entities were typically able to discuss all three projects with varying degrees of familiarity. Expectedly, respondents from local organizations could often speak with finer detail about the evolution of a particular project. For example, representatives from local organizations often gave detailed accounts of points of contention and compromise within the community as well as in relationship to government actors. At the local level, there was also a significant amount of knowledge among civic groups with regard to other social actors and projects.

In most cases, the researcher was a 'insider' rather than an outsider, having either worked directly with the respondent and in most cases having prior knowledge of persons or institutional practices (Alder & Alder, 1987). While the advantages of an outsider may be that he or she is not accountable to group solidarity and might be more sensitive to

relational processes, being an insider enables the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the context of social action (Emerson, 2001; Lofland et al., 2006). Detachment is more of a methodological concern than biases because it can lead to indifferent responses (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Still, whether the researcher is considered an insider or an outsider, the presentation of self in interviews is deemed critical for establishing credibility (Pile, 1991; Rosaldo, 1989). As a result, the role of the researcher was firmly established with each respondent in cases where there might be a familiarity with the researcher in another professional context. In addition, the researcher wrote down initial reactions and impressions following each interview in an attempt to reflect more fully on the dynamics happening within the interview setting and interpretive meanings.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was divided into four primary sections. The first section established the origin of a particular group within the larger history and context of the study area. This section established important controversies and compromises that have shaped project outcomes. Follow-up questions targeted the larger urban planning context including post-industrial change, real estate development, patterns of property ownership, and key state-led planning initiatives. In this case, the market was treated as a structural force rather than an actor. The second section of the interview protocol positioned the organization of study within a working definition of stewardship. This section established the type of stewardship actions undertaken by each group and how these actions helped to establish a group as a leader. The third section revealed social norms or how civic and state actors influenced a system of laws, rules, judicial decisions, and

flows of capital or administrative practices. Information gleaned in this section helps to specified political boundaries of stewardship groups and establishes a particular type of environmental governance. The fourth and final set of questions revealed the network of civic, state and market actors that are engaged in some level with the particular project.

Using data elicited from the semi-structured interview, social network analysis programs UCINET and NetDraw were used to develop network diagrams of the relations between civic groups, government groups and the private business sector in each of the three case studies (Borgatti, 2002; Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002; Degenne & Forse, 1999; Candace Jones, Hesterly, & Borgatti, 1997). In addition to network analyses, qualitative data has been collected from organizational nodes identified in the network analyses during open ended, semi-structured interviews and analyzed for emergent themes using NVivo. The function and behavior of the nodes, -- as lead civic stewardship and government groups -- was examined in terms of how they acquire capital resources, exchange information and share decision-making power. Interview data was used to support the claims made by civic and government representatives while network data is used to link and position these claims within the context of urban environmental governance.

Interpretive Validity and Analytical Procedures

All recorded data were transcribed along with notes from interviews and observations. The researcher recorded all data promptly and a qualitative data analysis program (NVivo) was used to store, sort and code these data. The first or initial round of coding was 'open,' inviting patterns to emerge in the data. A second round of coding was more focused and resulted in a revised coding scheme (Charmaz, 2001; Lofland et al.,

2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In addition, network diagrams were drawn from each respondent who answered the question regarding key social networks with federal, state and local government agencies as well as non-profits, business leaders and individuals. The diagrams are considered to be part of the analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Lofland et al., 2006) and are used to discover presence and absence of organizational networks. A qualitative comparative analysis technique was used to identify the conditions that might account for phenomena of interest when comparing across three cases. In this study, the phenomena of interest are the emergence of a lead stewardship actor and the processes and mechanism which shape forms of environmental governance (Lofland et al., 2006; C. Ragin & Becker, 1992; C. C. Ragin, 1987).

The misinterpretation of meaning through discourse is considered one of the main threats to qualitative validity (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). While it has been argued that validity rests on the exemplars of scientific practice rather than abstract rules there is a basis for validating the trustworthiness of interpretations and observations. Toward this end, criteria established by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were used in interpreting findings. The first criterion is *credibility* and how to achieve best an authentic representation of experience. To address issues associated with credibility, the researcher engaged with the subject matter over time and was able to build a rapport with respondents. In this way, there was a clear advantage to being an insider during the interview process. The cultural context of these groups was previously well-known to the researcher, which helps to minimize distortions introduced by self or the respondents (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Quotations from different respondents on the same subject, also known as ‘source triangulation,’ were used to corroborate constructs regarding organizational behaviors

(Eyles & Donovan, 1986). To address issues of *transferability*, information rich cases were used where respondents were at ease to provide contextual details regarding the subject of collaborations, stewardship and urban open space development. To ensure *dependability* of the data, in addition to use of a digital recorder, preliminary findings and general interpretations were discussed with peers active in the field of urban stewardship. Included in these discussions were representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service as well as program directors of civic stewardship groups in New York. With regard to *confirmability*, a concern over the extent to which biases or motivations of the researcher might influence interpretation, a journal was kept and reflections were recorded post interview.

In the chapters that follow I will describe the history of each lead stewardship organization or group of civic actors within the context of project development. I will discuss how this group or set of social actors functions in relation to other civic government entities. This discussion will include describing levels of contention and compromise. Finally, the outcomes of each project will be reported, as they are known at the time of writing. These outcomes include the state of project development as well as the projected form of environmental governance.

CHAPTER THREE

The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway

The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of a 14-mile greenway along the Brooklyn waterfront. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of industrial properties, small businesses and warehouses along with a mix of single-family brownstones, multi-family units and several large public housing facilities. According to the 2000 Census, the median average household income is \$39,685 in the neighborhoods adjacent to the greenway (NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy 2009; U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Within this area, Greenpoint and Williamsburg were ranked among the top fifteen community districts in New York City in terms of numbers of new residential units built between 2000 and 2008 (Armstrong et al., 2009).

Over the past two decades, artists, designers, entrepreneurs and young people were drawn by area's affordability, low rise buildings, abundant sunlight and waterfront views, and what has been described by some as a "romantically gritty, post-industrial landscape" (interview with White 2007; Whittner 2007). In the early 1990s, city agencies and community boards received a steady stream of requests from new constituents who demanded services including parks and playgrounds, expanded mass transit and affordable housing (interview with Halpren 2007; Stone 2007).

The founding members of the waterfront greenway movement became politically active between 1998 and 1999. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative was established as a formal 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization five years later in 2004. Group members believed that an urban greenway could help knit together diverse interests along a

rapidly-changing and highly desirable waterfront community. According to spokespersons for the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, a well-planned greenway would ensure continuous public access along or near the shoreline, reestablish physical and social connections between neighbors, and inspire inter-agency collaboration along the waterfront (interview with Goodyear 2007; Mack 2007).

Helping to secure millions of dollars for planning and construction of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, BGI is an example of a new type of grassroots group that has rapidly scaled up its operations from an all-volunteer effort to a professionalized community-based organization with a strategic network of public and private decision-makers. As a result of BGI's advocacy efforts, in 2004, U.S. Representative Nydia Velasquez secured \$14.6 million dollars in federal TEA-LU funding (Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users, H.R. 3550) for the greenway and design of Bush Terminal Park in Sunset Park (Hays, 2005)

Over the past few years, BGI has become intimately involved with the internal planning processes of city agencies such as the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). Members of BGI gained the trust of government planning staff. One senior DOT planner remarked that the group was "uniquely, well-positioned" to conduct community outreach and often served as a buffer between the department and "frustrated individuals who would attack us at community board meetings" (interview with Halpren 2007). Private and public funders of the greenway project alike have been impressed with this relatively new organization referring to the group leadership as "real go-getters" and "genuine community advocates" (interview with Hoover 2007; Mays 2007; Sampson 2007).

As evidence in this chapter will show, BGI staff created the political planning space for the Department of Transportation and other government agencies to consider new design proposals, share technical information, and efficiently resolve disputes with local stakeholders. The greenway and the efforts of BGI represent a moderate form of hybrid governance where contentious politics were contained and an informal partnership between civic organizations and local government eventually ensued.

A Brief History

The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative

In many ways, increasing tensions between local residents, business interests and government-led economic development projects was the impetus for the formation of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative. In the 1990s, proposed rezoning procedures by city planners had created a great deal of uncertainty among area residents and businesses. The group's founding members feared that if they did not organize a collective community-based effort; their concerns would be left unaddressed in the waterfront revitalization process. Many BGI members expressed little faith that participating in community board meetings was an effective form of civic participation (interview with Mack 2007).

In the early 1990s, the Department of City Planning issued two plans that had a fundamental impact on civic advocacy and the redevelopment of the Brooklyn waterfront. The first was a long-awaited Waterfront Redevelopment Plan that was released in 1992 (Department of City Planning, 1992). Spanning the city's entire 578-mile waterfront, the plan set forth an expansive vision including a framework for regulatory action, public access and private business incentives. While acknowledging

the importance of retaining industrial land use in specified areas, the plan signaled an end to a waterfront dominated by private interests. The plan created an opportunity to redress nearly a half-century of restricted public access as well as noxious and toxic land uses opposed by community planners, civic activists, and elected officials. Redevelopment efforts would not be easy as the property ownership along the Brooklyn waterfront was a patchwork assemblage of private and publicly owned land. At the same time, redevelopment was controversial, creating tensions among residents and industrial workers over how much of the waterfront area should be retained for industrial use versus housing and recreational use (interview with Costello 2007; Wright 2008).

A year later, in 1993, the Department of City Planning issued another plan that also had direct bearing on shoreline redevelopment. The Greenway Plan (Department of City Planning, 1993) called for development of 350 miles of landscaped bike and pedestrian paths throughout the city. The plan aimed to establish greater connectivity of public parkland along the waterfront and identified new public access points. Planners had sketched out a Brooklyn Waterfront Trail which was a rather general route along the waterfront starting from the Brooklyn Bridge and ending in the Red Hook neighborhood.

The idea of a more expansive greenway that began further north in the communities of Greenpoint and Williamsburg through Red Hook to the Sunset Park neighborhood was inspired by the release of these two plans as well as proposed projects including a larger waterfront park in Williamsburg, conversion of the Port Authority piers into the Brooklyn Bridge Park, building a park and ferry launch alongside the home furnishing store, IKEA, in Red Hook, and constructing a park on the Bush Terminal Piers in Sunset Park (interview with Martin 2007).

In the years following the release of these ambitious plans, the land along the Brooklyn waterfront had been characterized as “up for grabs” (interview with Costello 2007). For some, the idea of rezoning created opportunities including new housing developments, public parks and retail areas. For others, specifically representatives of traditional maritime industries, redevelopment created a slightly “uneasy feeling” over the loss of future employment. New residents and homeowners feared that planning efforts would become too fragmented and opportunities to create a cohesive waterfront community would be overtaken by large retail stores (interview with Costello 2007).

Despite this uneasiness, in the years following the release of the Waterfront and Greenway plans, redevelopment proceeded incrementally as rezoning plans were designed and approved, request for proposals were issued, funding was secured and the City Council held urban land use reviews (Cardwell, 2005b). The result of many years of work by transportation advocates and government staffers, the greenway plan only gained momentum as funds became available from the federal government’s Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act and related acts and amendments. In the case of the Waterfront Plan, many projects were stalled due to pending litigation with property owners and community groups during the Giuliani Administration in the 1990s (interview with McAfee 2007; Stone 2007).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, urban planning advocacy groups such as the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance and the Regional Plan Association, addressed the issue of connectivity and public access along the city’s shoreline. In fact, the Regional Plan Association had been awarded grant funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to assess ways to improve public access around strategic waterfront locations. As part of

this grant funded project, the Regional Plan Association (RPA) focused their efforts on a controversial matter involving waterfront Piers 7-12 that extended along Columbia Street and Van Brunt Streets in the Red Hook neighborhood (interview with Costello 2007). Along this stretch of the waterfront, tensions arose between those interested in maintaining the piers for industrial and maritime use while residents advocated for waterfront access, new parks and recreation opportunities (Hays, 2001, 2003). While this was not the only area of contention it later became an important catalyst for the formation of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative and the development of a waterfront greenway.

In an effort to create a collaborative redevelopment vision for the waterfront, planners at RPA coordinated workshops and listened attentively during community meetings where key neighborhood leaders and local concerns were identified. During this time, Transportation Alternatives, a citywide non-profit advocating for new forms of urban transit, also began to engage with local efforts to develop a waterfront greenway. These citywide and regional planning groups established relationships with individuals and local neighborhood organizations active in waterfront issues in an effort to facilitate redevelopment (interview with Costello 2007; Fleishman 2007; Goodman 2007).

Urban planning efforts are notoriously complex and become more complicated when there are multiple property owners, active civic groups, competitive financing, and little incentive for inter-agency coordination. As one regional planner working on the greenway project in Brooklyn commented,

It's such an intense, thick world in the city between neighborhood groups and the bureaucracies, you know, given the funding process and the competition for space. You put just as much effort in moving a curb out an extra four feet in the city than you do in other places where you are

working with hundreds of thousands of acres. It's the same level of effort for what sometimes seems like a much smaller result (Costello 2007).

As they continued their work on the waterfront, planners from the Regional Plan Association and Transportation Alternatives became acquainted with a small group of community activists. The original members of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative were residents of the Columbia Waterfront Community, an area that included much of Piers 7-12 along Columbia Street. The area around the Port Authority Piers was highly contentious as stakeholders publically argued over issues such as expanding local truck routes, developing new housing, and reducing the size of the commercial shipping port (interview with Goodman 2007; White 2007).

Civic Action

Unlike the urban park elite long-hailed as influential in open space planning, BGI members described themselves as “ordinary Joes and Josephines” who considered themselves part of a grassroots community movement (interview with Mack 2007). This group of like-minded educated and politically aware neighbors was astutely able to assess the political landscape governing the segment of the waterfront that they wanted to affect, and then positioned themselves in and around the organizational structure of government agencies and the business community to accomplish their goals. BGI leaders were permanent residents and savvy professionals with the type of social networks that enabled them to impact a broad range of social strata, including influential urban decision-makers.

For example, the founding members of BGI all had prior experience in public and private financing, historic preservation, and even public education programs focused on maritime history. RPA planners and other well-regarded members of the planning and development community openly supported the group's efforts. Their relationship with

established groups such as RPA helped BGI to establish initial trust with planners, funders and developers (interview with Sampson 2007). In addition, the group developed a rapport with waterfront real estate developers and private water ferry company owners. BGI also became active in Brooklyn's Chamber of Commerce. As a member of the Chamber, BGI was explicit about its desire for business partnerships not only in terms of project donations but to promote a shared vision of a revitalizing the waterfront (interview with Goodyear 2007).

The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative's style of community organizing harkened back to the way members first met through street corner conversations, sitting on the front stoops of brownstones, and other neighborhood interactions including community gardening and trash clean-ups. Several BGI members reported that they were initially introduced to the greenway project through impromptu conversations in local bars and cafes. In an effort to strengthen civic stewardship through personal networking, BGI members joined with open space advocates from adjacent neighborhoods in related efforts to improve local streetscapes, pocket parks and other nearby waterways such as the Gowanus Canal (interview with Dey 2007; Mack 2007).

In building their membership years before the greenway was developed, BGI founders were strategically aware of the need to capture and sustain the attention of local stakeholders whether their particular interests might be biking, walking, jogging, strolling, and sitting in a relaxed waterfront setting or developing new housing or commercial establishments. The group's leadership made themselves visible in the community by attending neighborhood events and festivals. In addition, the greenway

group sponsored monthly clean-ups, organized bike rides and canvassed neighborhoods with flyers and copies of the proposed greenway trail (interview with Dey 2007).

Trust among the community, according to BGI leadership, was built through “good, old fashioned hard work” (interview with Goodyear 2007). Working in partnership with RPA in 2005 and 2006, the group hosted a series of community design meetings to engage local stakeholders in the greenway planning process. This information was then taken to planners working within the Department of Transportation, the Parks Department and the Economic Development Corporation. Over time, the greenway group served as a liaison between the local community and government often pivoting back and forth between technocratic jargon and neighborhood concerns (interview with Dey 2007). The group gradually distinguished itself from the broader constituency of RPA, as BGI was understood to be the local group that directly represented local neighborhood concerns.

In addition to strategic community outreach, BGI established a foothold as a leading stewardship group for reasons related to the local context of civic activism. At the time of BGI’s founding, there were several organized civic environmental efforts located in and around the Brooklyn waterfront (Dana R Fisher et al., in process; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008). Figure 3-1 shows the clustering of civic organizations reported to conserve, manage, monitor, advocate and educate the public about aspect of the local environment in the area. It depicts both the location of each group as well as their stewardship sphere that is their geographic area of activity. The majority of groups are clustered within residential areas away from the industrial waterfront. Groups that have established their work closer to the waterfront are located primarily around the Brooklyn

Bridge neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO as well as in the nearby Carroll Gardens, Red Hook and the Gowanus Canal communities. Civic environmental stewardship was less dense in areas north of the Brooklyn Navy Yard in the Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities and further south in Sunset Park.

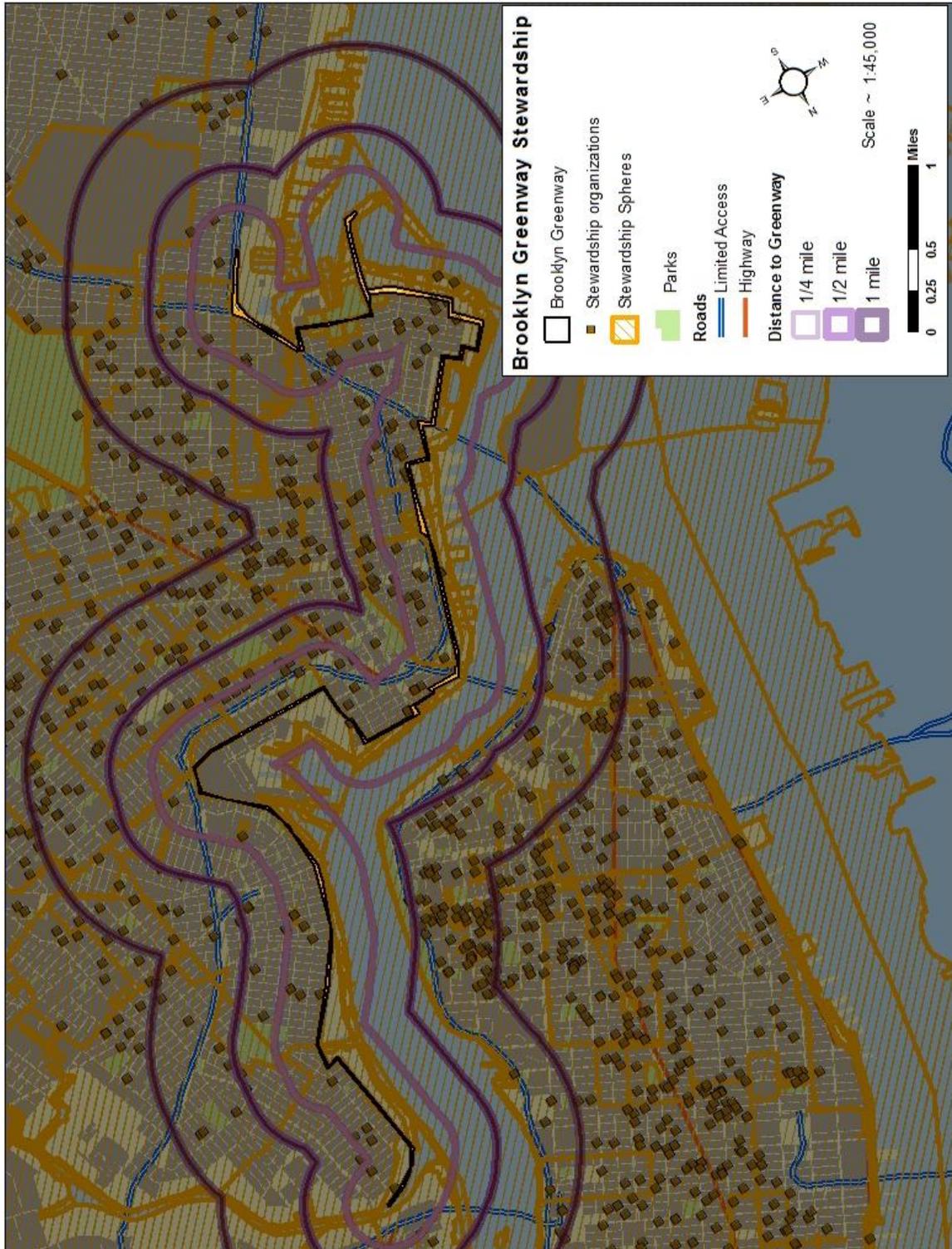


Figure 3-1 A map of environmental stewardship organizations within 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway.

BGI was established in the wake of a highly contentious era of Brooklyn activism over the siting of waste transfer stations where government plans or planning processes were not to be trusted by the community. Some of the more active groups along the waterfront originated during the mid-1990s in opposition to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's plan to establish new waste transfer stations along the Brooklyn waterfront. Groups such as Neighbors against Garbage (NAGs) in Greenpoint-Williamsburg and Groups against Garbage (GAGs) in Red Hook were particularly active during that time period.

In contrast to the protest tactics such as rallies at City Hall and disrupting government hearings used by groups fighting against the transfer stations, BGI sought to work with government and industry in an attempt to recruit others to a collaborative vision rather than to create an oppositional stance. Given its newcomer status, this subtle shift in contentious urban planning politics turned BGI into a trustworthy, non-adversarial, peer group in the opinion of many government and foundation representatives (interview with Whittner 2007).

In addition, after success against the waste transfer stations (Cardwell, 2005a), Red Hook's Groups against Garbage (GAGs) struggled to redefine its mission and as a result the territory between Brooklyn Heights and Sunset Park lacked any clear environmental civic leadership. This in-between area, known to community planners as the Columbia Waterfront District, became a natural place for BGI to establish new civic environmental leadership. The Columbia Waterfront District was located at the edge or end of several well-established communities including Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens yet it did not belong to either as it was undergoing a period of transition from vacancy and neglect to full-occupancy and renewal.

By filling the stewardship void along the Columbia Waterfront District, by the mid-2000s, BGI had secured its base of operations. From this position, BGI recruited, organized, engaged and inspired civic stewardship community along Brooklyn's waterfront and within communities such as Carroll Gardens and even as far inland as Park Slope. However, BGI was not always well received. While conducting community outreach for the greenway in the two largest public housing complexes along the greenway, Farragut Houses and the Red Hook Houses, the group's leaders were surprised when they received a tepid, and in one case, a hostile response to canvassing efforts. A BGI staff person commented on the visit to the Red Hook Houses, "They said to us, 'People like you don't come in here and if they do, they get hurt.' And for the first time doing this work, I felt like a real outsider" (interview with Mack 2007).

Views regarding the greenway varied across the civic landscape. For example, civic groups representing the Brooklyn Heights neighborhood wanted to minimize extensions of the greenway fearing that it would increase pedestrian traffic along its quiet, residential streets as visitors traveled to and from an enormous new public facility along the waterfront, the Brooklyn Bridge Park (interview with Mack 2007).

In Sunset Park, neighborhood groups feared a greenway would actually concentrate activity along the waterfront leaving the neighborhood streets devoid of new opportunities for economic development and further isolate its working class community. An urban planning consultant working in Sunset Park for UpRose, Brooklyn's oldest Latino community-based organization, was adamant about the greenway's initial potential to cause harm.

Sure, the greenway will fill in that missing link along the waterfront and that is an important goal of the Sunset Park community. But linking the

waterfront to the upland residential community, is if anything, much more important. It wouldn't do the Sunset Park residents a bit of good to have just a waterfront greenway. It would be almost an anti-community project because it would serve other people who simply want to go through Sunset Park (interview with Donovan 2007).

In addition, UpRose leadership was skeptical of BGI's intentions when it began community outreach in Sunset Park in 2004. The Regional Plan Association and the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative helped to raise the planning funds for the Sunset Park portion of the greenway which gave these groups a new position of power that made UpRose leadership feel uncomfortable (interview with Wade 2007). A lead spokesperson for UpRose felt that BGI was "encroaching on our community" and described the group as a "bunch of newcomers who started to come into the community and designing a greenway for us rather than with us" (interview with Hernandez 2007). Although frustrated by the claims made by UpRose leadership, BGI and RPA were sensitive of the need to "do things differently" in Sunset Park. The group respected UpRose's prior accomplishments and noted its political influence in the community (interview with Mack 2007). By accepting UpRose's decision create its own community outreach strategy that emphasized existing local needs and how they could be addressed by a greenway design, BGI eventually gained the tacit trust of UpRose. As of 2009, the director of UpRose is now a member of BGI's Broad of Directors.

Urban Planning Context

Establishing Trust

In addition to civic groups such as UpRose, BGI needed to establish its position within the larger urban planning framework of city government. It began by serving as a liaison between government and the community at large. Despite a growing number of

requests for coordination, the City did not have a dedicated staff person or a centralized office able to address the growing number of issues associated with neighborhood greenways. City staff members expressed the need for such an office provided that the person would be located within the Office of the Mayor. Many greenway issues are multi-jurisdictional and require city-wide decision-making across competing agencies (interview with Halpren 2007; Larson 2007). For example, the Department of Transportation was involved in greenway planning but the majority of its resources and attention went to provide safe and efficient roadways. Similarly, Parks Department staff was wary of accepting new designs and additional projects that would increase its maintenance responsibility without supplementing its annual operating budget (interview with Larson 2007).

Planners at the Department of Transportation admit that in most cases unless a local group can secure supplemental resources for a greenway, the department proposes a “standard vanilla model” which is typically an on-street bike lane (interview with Halpren 2007). The onus is then on the community group to assure the department that additional resources can be secured for design and maintenance.

According to Department of Transportation staff, an ideal private partner is not a new community group but rather a Business Improvement District (BID) or an established, fiscally solvent group with an operating budget of at least \$100,000 and a track record of success. It was especially important to city agencies that BGI raised its own funds and brought resources *into* government; this act demonstrated success that helped the group gain support within the Department of Transportation and the Parks Department (interview with Halpren 2007; Stone 2007). Private fundraising potential

encouraged city planners to embrace innovative greenway designs and helped establish BGI as an influential civic partner with government. As long as funding was secured, the larger aspects of the greenway was considered non-controversial and win-win public project.

With regard to the government and private developers, BGI had become an important node in the network of redevelopment entities along the waterfront. In fact, real estate developers were given the opportunity to reduce liability of their building footprint by the City if they ceded space to the greenway as part of their development projects (interview with Goodyear 2007; Nu 2007). For other developers and real estate brokers, the greenway was an amenity that complimented new residential projects. As one real estate development remarked, “My customers are not just buying a condo but rather a lifestyle that includes the ability to walk or bike from their residence throughout a fantastic waterfront district” (interview with Mince 2007).

For government officials, private business owners and residents alike, BGI served as a source of information, but also provided a mechanism through which individuals could participate in urban planning processes in a non-controversial way. BGI established a high degree of trust with federal, state and local government officials. These officials candidly remarked on their appreciation for BGI’s respectful understanding of municipal capacities and constraints.

Yet, others have added that a new administration paved the way for groups such as BGI to have substantive involvement in urban planning issues (interview with Fleishman 2007; Wilson 2007; Wright 2008). Several city planners and civic advocates have remarked that until the mayoral inauguration of Michael Bloomberg in 2002, little

was done to resolve the disputes that had stymied waterfront redevelopment projects (Goodyear 2007; Halpren 2007). In fact, government planners reported during the Bloomberg Administration they were encouraged to work more effectively, creatively, and collaboratively with business and the local civic community.

One city transportation official remarked that the Bloomberg administration reinforced the need for greater accessibility and communication between the department's borough offices and agency headquarters making possible projects such as the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway (interview with Department of Transportation representative). During the Bloomberg Administration, EDC planners felt an *esprit de corps* in public service that encouraged grand plans, creative strategies, and innovation. Other EDC staff members specifically remarked that they felt empowered to reach out to community groups and participate in local alliances and coalitions rather than simply appearing as required at community board meetings and City Council hearings on a matter of public review (interview with McAfee 2007; Singh 2007).

The New York City Economic Development Corporation played a critical role in brokering important greenway partnerships between BGI and entities such as the Port Authority, Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation (BBPDC). In the words of one environmental planner, "EDC was a huge ally. They viewed the greenway as a way to help with their larger agenda of revitalizing the waterfront" (interview with Costello 2007). EDC worked actively to broker the greenway project across agencies and, in conjunction with its existing leaseholders and local economic development corporations. Once assured that there would be a private partner to assist with fundraising and maintenance, the Parks

Department lent administrative support to the greenway, recognizing the critical role it could play in linking park property along and near the waterfront (interview with Stone 2007).

In many ways, government involvement in the greenway was motivated by a clear interest in avoiding conflict and leveraging new resources to support local waterfront redevelopment. Real estate developers as opposed to manufacturers and small local businesses favored the greenway as an opportunity to add value to new and existing properties. A social network analysis of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway shows government, business and civic groups engaged in social networks based upon an exchange of information, funding and decision-making. Within this network, business groups are located at the periphery while a mix of governmental agencies and civic groups remain within the core (see Figure 3-2).

Levels of Contention

From Controversy to Compromise

By collaborating so closely with business and government, BGI created a clear separation from individual open space activists in the community who had long-running disputes with city officials over the use of the waterfront and private business interests. Representatives of BGI strongly believed that an oppositional approach would not build the greenway. Instead, their goal was to become a professionalized organization with a paid staff, fiscal responsibility, and active board membership. As one representative from BGI recounted,

It's a job. It's not something you can set up and put on autopilot. In fact, it's going to be a constant job for somebody in this stewardship entity to manage the relationship with property owners, public and private, and with all the state and federal folks who are supplying the revenue to fill the gaps (interview with Goodyear 2007).

At the same time, the founding members were dedicated to an organizational philosophy tending toward conciliation rather than opposition.

One of the first contentious issues related to the waterfront greenway created a permanent rift between community greenway supporters. This issue arose as the Department of Transportation began to propose new plans for widening neighborhood streets for additional truck traffic in the late 1990s. According to a Department of Transportation spokesperson, the street-widening project was necessary to accommodate an increase in truck traffic at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's shipping port (interview with Halpren 2007). The street widening proposal was presented at the time when the future of waterfront was being debated and therefore became part of the simmering tensions between the community, the city and private development. While the

Department of Transportation did not oppose a community greenway in the area, their initial notion, their plan was to propose a ‘vanilla-model’ of an on-street bike lane along Columbia Street.

This idea was unacceptable to greenway advocates who called for a 30-foot wide, off-street pedestrian and bicycle path with a continuous line of tree plantings to buffer adjacent lanes of traffic and to connect Brooklyn Heights with Red Hook (interview with Mack 2007). In addition to the Department of Transportation’s proposal, a group of agencies led by the New York City Economic Development Corporation issued a public request for proposals to use a portion of the property along Columbia Street for residential housing. Suddenly this relatively small stretch along the waterfront became highly sought after.

In an effort to coordinate intra-agency proposals for the area and proactively address what city planners expected to be a contentious public comment period, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) created a special planning task force comprised of city agencies and focused on the section of Columbia Street known as ‘Piers 7-12.’ In response to the agency-led task force, local citizens formed their own task force dedicated to the development of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. The focus of the civic-lead task force included the entire 14-mile stretch of waterfront from Newtown Creek near the Greenpoint community to the Shore Parkway in Bay Ridge as well as the portion of the greenway affected by the development of Piers 7-12.

Mirroring the organizational framework of local government, BGI leaders invited representatives from federal, state and local agencies and area businesses to participate on their citizen task force. In the case of the civic task force, discussion went beyond the

waterfront piers. Ironically, it was the citizen-led task force rather than the government-led task force that took up the cause of long-term planning. In the words of Andrew Goodyear, a founding member of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative:

Our group was just citizens. There was another reconstruction task force that included our group, the government and the community board. So, there were these two task force groups. The government one was interim - - just a short-term thing. Ours was more of a long-term association and focused on the whole of the waterfront (interview with Goodyear 2007)

Over time, agency staff developed a trust in BGI believing the group to be motivated and highly capable (interview with Halpren 2007). Still, neighborhood open space advocates who remained opposed to the street widening efforts were bitter toward others who were willing to work with government on the special task force groups. These advocates felt that neither the state-led or civic-led task force structure supported an open, participatory process. As such, they argued that BGI had ‘sold out’ to government. These individuals appeared at local community meetings claiming that the group sacrificed residents along Van Brunt Street in Red Hook order to secure their own interests along Columbia Street. In fact, some felt that BGI’s ability to express their opinions had been suppressed through the use of a special task force. After all, BGI and Transportation Alternatives were the only civic groups that participated in government-led task force (interview with Costello 2007; Mack 2007).

When asked about whether the group had ‘sold out’ along the waterfront, BGI felt that a non-oppositional approach was the only way to gain insight into complex government processes critical to BGI’s role as a civic broker or negotiator for the greenway (interview with Dey 2007; Goodyear 2007). A founding member of BGI recounts with pride his way of dealing with government representatives,

Our approach was subtle. But we didn't give them the opportunity to dismiss us. They tried. I think it's really about how we managed our relationships that we were able to keep them at the table. We didn't push so far that they left the table with no agreement. But we also had very strong words with them. But my point is that we found a way to keep them talking with us (interview with Goodyear 2007).

This response is typical of other environmental governance models where civil society is fully conscious of their role critiquing government but at the same time, understand the need to work with government to accomplish their goals (Tomas M. Koontz & Thomas, 2006; Lake & Newman, 2002).

Compromise did yield tangible results for the greenway. For example, the question of how the greenway would intersect or engage with the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a decommissioned naval base, had the potential to become highly contentious. However, BGI simply agreed with the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation's expressed interest of keeping the greenway out of the yard. In the local Williamsburg community, yielding to government interests might have caused BGI to lose its stature as a trusted civic group. For years, local residents had advocated for use of the grounds of the Navy Yard as it occupied a large area along the waterfront and prevented community access to the shoreline (Brick, 2004). In this instance, BGI skillfully distanced their organization from local tensions and included the Navy Yard group as a project partner. BGI's relatively quick concession led to an agreement to locate the greenway along the external, eastern border of the Navy Yard. In exchange, the Navy Yard and Department of Transportation agreed to expand this space allowing for more greenery. The Navy Yard group also became a strong supporter of the greenway. The Navy Yard representatives agreed to maintain the border area between their property and the greenway year round and to provide nearby storage space for greenway maintenance equipment. At the same

time, BGI began to work on rerouting traffic patterns along local streets such as Kent Avenue. This action helped BGI to gain favor with local bike and environmental advocates.

Further evidence of BGI's ability to reframe controversy into compromise can be found in the final decision to allow access to the greenway along Columbia Street. By 2005, BGI leadership was able to persuade the Port Authority leadership to adjust its property line by the few feet necessary to allow for a 30-foot wide, off-street greenway. According to a BGI representative, it was Port Authority Director's Christopher Ward, who made the final decision.

The Port Authority gave us some early property. We actually met with the Executive Director. I remember being with him at the World Trade Center... and we were in his office and I remember him looking down at the waterfront and saying, 'Just tell me how much you need and let's just do it as long as there is no controversy, -- let's just do it (interview with Mack 2007).

Initially, the Agreement BGI made with the Port Authority was informal.

The literature on collaborative governance tends to view such informality as a partnership rather than a form of governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008). However, in this case, BGI engaged in a seemingly countless number of informal agreements which led to a shared responsibility for establishing the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. The point here is that informal agreements have a definite and important role in the evolution of governing processes and structures.

Hybrid Governance and Project Outcomes

As a result of their ability to negotiate with competing interests as well as a professional commitment to a comprehensive vision for the greenway, BGI earned the distinction of a grassroots advocacy group able to gain the full confidence of elected

officials, civic leaders, planners, funders and the local development community. As a Brooklyn-based foundation director noted,

They were positive from the outset. They just sort of stepped out and said, ‘we want to accomplish this.’ Strategically this was somewhat unique that they started out in a positive way and continued to do the hard work to engage elected officials, city government, and foundations too. You run the risk, in some ways, of not being taken seriously because you’re not angry and you’re not pounding the table. So, will people listen to you if you come off in this positive way? I think there are lessons to be learned in their ability to engage people (interview with Whittner 2007)

Within the span of just a few years, BGI had become a successful civic organization that led the way for a large-scale capital project. No one was more surprised than Steve Mack, a founding member of the group, who noted that the road to success was reminiscent of the type of ‘behind-the-scenes’ deals historically associated with private industry and government (interview with Mack 2007). In this case, it was a civic stewardship group rather than the urban business elite that became ‘the back-room broker’ able to access channels of power.

While BGI members sympathized with other concerns along the waterfront they stopped short of joining local battles over rezoning in Greenpoint-Williamsburg, environmental justice issues in Sunset Park, and land use at the Brooklyn Container Park in Red Hook. The group’s leadership was wary of becoming embroiled in these disputes. Instead, BGI sought to partner with government agencies and promoted a positive vision that focused on finding common solutions to problems associated with planning the greenway through each community. As an organization, BGI would concede on an issue only if it meant that other aspects of the greenway could go forward. A founding member of BGI reflects on the organization’s contentious decision not to fight for the greenway along Van Brunt Street in Red Hook.

“Our goal was to have the greenway go down Van Brunt Street in Red Hook but it just didn’t work out that way. Sometimes you have to realize to take your winnings and go home. So like we hit a triple but why make it a homer? We figure that you consolidate your gains and come back to fight another day” (interview with Goodyear 2007).

A residual feeling that BGI had ‘sold out’ still lingers among some local activists but has waned over time (interview with two private foundation officers, a BGI member and a local advocate). In many ways, BGI has an entirely different basis of authority than other civic groups who gain power through litigation or negative campaign tactics (E. P. Weber, 1998). Instead, BGI’s authority comes from being a negotiator, a broker, a savvy technocrat and a buffer between government and a potential more contentious civic society.

As a community-based organization, BGI leadership felt tremendous pressure to “deliver the greenway” to its local constituency within a reasonable time frame (interview with Mack 2007). The greenway group spent a great deal of time appealing to the business sector via economic development corporations, the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and individual real estate developers in order to demonstrate to government that the project was critical to economic development. At the same time, BGI worked to influence government from an external position but was able to use trust established with staffers to infiltrate the workings of various agencies in an effort to facilitate project development.

In turn, government benefitted from BGI’s position as buffer between their offices and the local community. When street front business owners on Kent Avenue in Williamsburg complained that new bike lanes in front of their stores in 2009 negatively affected their business, BGI joined the Department of Transportation representatives at

community meetings to offer a response and worked behind the scenes to work out a compromise (Moynihan, 2009). This type of mediation is further evidence of how BGI has sought to support the position of government while addressing core issues of community concern.

For nearly thirteen years, BGI members have been driving the process of greenway design and development. Initially, aside from a proposed drawing of the Brooklyn Waterfront Trail in the 1993 Greenway Plan, participation by local government agencies was not particularly strong but grew over time as the greenway inspired a shared, public vision along the waterfront.

While BGI became the core node in a network of private and public organizations working on the greenway, powerful decision-making capacity still resides within government. But unlike most public planning projects where local government takes the lead on implementation, agencies such as the Department of Transportation rely on BGI as a community liaison. Even though there is no formal agreement between the City of New York and the Brooklyn greenway group, there is evidence of a moderate form of hybrid governance. There is a shared vision for the greenway and a clear partnership between civil society and government that has moved beyond leveraging. Each group serves as an advisor to the other on matters where there is a sense of a shared responsibility. Although governing agreement between the city and BGI is informal, the collaborative is grounded through joint fundraising and the co-development of long-term goals. Still, the ultimate responsibility for the greenway once it is constructed will reside with local government.

Working with BGI, the Department of Transportation has hired a private planning and design firm, The RBA Group, to finalize a master plan for the construction of the greenway by the end of 2010. The master plan will then be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget as a city capital project and pending approvals will be implemented over the course of the next few years. The Department of Transportation has taken the lead on establishing the greenway using the existing roadbed. An example of this work can be seen along Kent Avenue where the streets are reconfigured and dedicated bike lanes have been established. In sum, local government has resumed their traditional role of convening community meetings and setting the planning agenda for the greenway. In the spring of 2010, a round of neighborhood planning meetings were coordinated by the Department of Transportation in collaboration with BGI (interview with Dey 2007). This transition back to traditional roles marks perhaps a subtle but important shift in hybrid governance suggesting that property jurisdiction remains an important factor in who ultimately bears the long-term responsibility for a particular project. While city government may eventually take on the maintenance role, BGI will continue to be a civic steward of the greenway through sponsoring events, programs and strengthening local alliances along the Brooklyn waterfront.

CHAPTER FOUR

The High Line

In contrast to the sprawling Brooklyn Waterfront that spans different neighborhoods, the High Line is situated in a relatively compact post-industrial area nestled between the West Side Highway and the greater Chelsea neighborhood. Similar to the Brooklyn waterfront, the 1990s was a period of significant transformation in the neighborhoods of far West Chelsea and the Meatpacking District. The area underwent a local renaissance as artists, business entrepreneurs, and real estate developers flocked to this community comprised primarily of warehouse spaces, delivery garages and parking lots. Drawn to the area's waterfront views and emerging art scene, investors envisioned many exciting opportunities for redevelopment. A major rezoning effort by the City of New York's Department of City Planning heightened investment interest in the community during this time. Art galleries, trendy bars, and restaurants replaced warehouses and vacant lots seemingly overnight. According to local residents, street life flourished at all hours of the day (interview with Comstock 2009).

The High Line community is a mix of low-income families and high earning households. According to the 2000 Census, the average median household income is \$51,620 with the range spanning \$13,210 to \$81,464 per year (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). The area ranks among one of the lowest areas in the City with households with children under 18 years old (Armstrong et al., 2009). Despite having an older population and a wide range of incomes, community planners find there is a particularly high demand for diverse parks and open space resources (interview with Stone 2007).

Unlike communities along the Brooklyn waterfront, the Clinton/Chelsea neighborhood is traditionally considered by economic development planners as stable in

terms of maintaining property values (interview with Singh 2007). Still, the area experienced a noticeable surge in residential units from 2000-2008. At the center of the neighborhood's renaissance was a rather nondescript, long defunct, steel framed elevated rail line. The High Line, as it is known, rises nearly 30 feet above grade and spans approximately 22 neighborhood blocks. Artists had envisioned fanciful reuses for the rail line and as such, it soon became an iconic symbol of a neighborhood undergoing a dramatic change. The story of the old rail line harkens back to an exciting and sentimental era of prewar New York. To many, the High Line represented a living piece of city history inspiring New York's literary, artistic and development community to discover a new age of urban design amongst its ruins (Ouroussoff, 2004; Wilson, 2005).

A Brief History

Built in the 1930s, the High Line provided freight service along Manhattan's West Side for nearly fifty years. Aside from hauling freight, the elevated rail line was constructed in response to a longstanding dispute over transportation safety between civic activists, public officials, the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Company, and local business owners. By the late 1800s, as the population along the West Side grew and the volume of goods transported by street level crossings increased, pedestrian safety became a primary concern. As a remedy to prevent injuries and deaths, men on horseback known as the 'West Side Cowboys' were hired to walk in front of each train waving red flags to warn pedestrians of on-coming locomotives (interview with Alexander 2007).

By the 1900s, despite these and other efforts to safeguard pedestrians and continue the transport of goods, the area along 10th, 11th and 12th Avenues became known

as ‘Death Avenue.’ Civic groups such as the Social Reform Club’s Committee of 50 and the League to End Death Avenue campaigned aggressively against the railroad company in support of pedestrian safety. After decades of street accidents and in anticipation of the planned construction of an elevated train track, Mayor Jimmy Walker ceremoniously removed a railroad spike from the ‘Death Avenue Tracks’ in 1929 (Casey Jones, 2002). The High Line officially opened as a working rail line on June 28, 1934. City officials and railroad executives alike hailed the project as a fine example of public planning that had successfully met the needs of the public and private sector (Casey Jones, 2002). Nearly sixty-five years later, Friends of the High Line would draw upon this history in an effort to preserve the High Line as a public resource.

By the 1980s, the majority of freight service had long-since been relocated across the Hudson River in New Jersey or replaced entirely by truck transport. The High Line, as it stood unused, was thought to limit economic development as it created dark shadows, attracted nefarious activities underneath the tracks, and stymied opportunities to use contiguous land parcels efficiently for redevelopment. The future of the old rail line was uncertain, as adjacent property owners had started a vigorous campaign in the 1980s to tear down the remaining tracks.

The High Line Community Today

In 1999, a group of concerned citizens, known as Friends of the High Line (FHL), began a high profile, civic -led campaign to prevent the rail line from being torn down. The initial intent of the group was to make the general public aware of the existence of the High Line and to engage decision-makers in a discussion over its reuse. For several years, the Chelsea Property Owners had organized an effort to demolish the rail line as

they claimed it would diminish the area's real estate value. As FHL co-founder Robert Hammond has publically remarked, "At first we just wanted to raise the flag and to let people know that this incredible place existed in New York -- to have some discussion about it" (public lecture by Hammond 2007). The 'incredible place' to which he was referring to was atop the rail line's viaduct where twenty-years of self-seeding red sumac; milkweed, Echinacea and smoke bush had grown over the tracks. This miniature secondary growth wilderness in Manhattan was out of sight to those at street level. However, for those walking on the line, thirty feet above the ground, the High Line offered peaceful and rare 'mid-canopy' views of the city as it wound its way through, around and alongside buildings between 9th and 10th Avenues.

The section of rail line that has attracted a great deal of public attention spans nearly 1.5 miles across private and public properties from Gansevoort Street to 30th Street. Part of the original line was torn down in the 1960s when the New York Central Railroad sold its west side terminal and ended rail service south of Bank Street. Over the next fifteen years, the railroad changed ownership several times until the last train ran on the tracks in 1980 (Casey Jones, 2002). Another section of track was torn down leaving the rail line's terminus where it remains today at Gansevoort Street.

By the early 2000s, Friends of the High Line had proposed converting the old rail line into a public park. As opposed to the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, which is focused on local community organizing and outreach to rank-and-file government planners, FHL's outreach developed into a sophisticated marketing campaign using art competitions and exhibits targeting high-level decision-makers and New York City's corporate elite. The campaign purposely juxtaposed themes of emergent nature as a relief

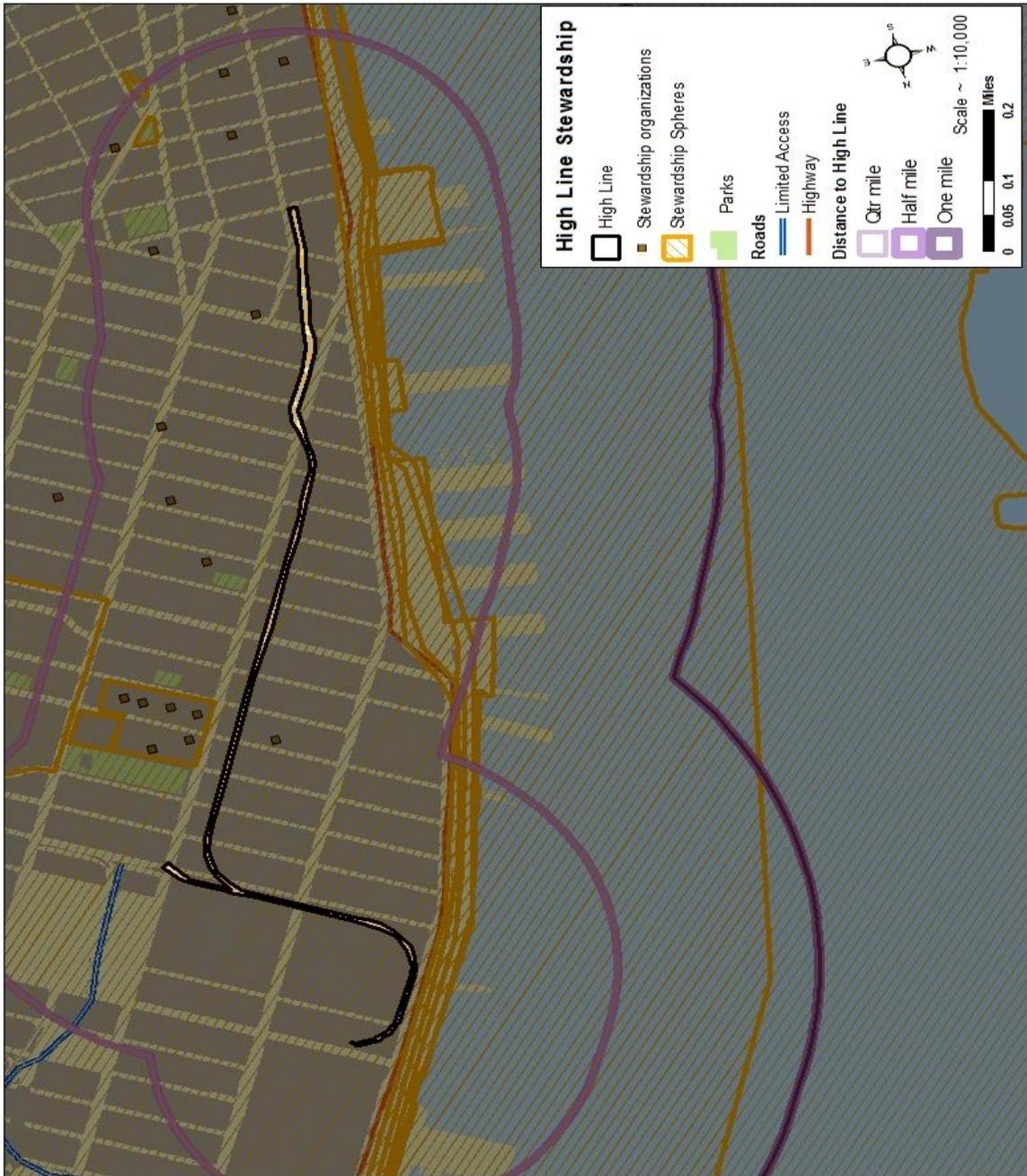
from an imposing street grid. “We wanted to go back to that aesthetic, that sense of nature’s power to take over in the city,” said Joshua David in a New York Times editorial (Clines, 2009). With the intent of creating a “work of art” and a “park to rival Central Park,” the campaign created a clear niche for the FHL, not only in the future development of the park but in expanding a particular design aesthetic in and around the surrounding community (public lecture by Hammond 2007; Plummer 2007). Similar to bourgeois New Yorkers of the late 19th Century depicted by Scobey (2003), in designing parks, advocating for new planning codes and remaking neighborhoods, FHL gave rise to a new urban parks constituency centered upon the notion of parks as functional forms of public art.

While Friends of the High Line is not the only civic environmental group in the area, it was one of only a few organizations active along the far west corridor between the West Side Highway and Chelsea. The lack of dedicated parks groups within these neighborhoods gave Friends of the High Line an opportunity to stand out as a leading open space advocate in this community.

Figure 4-1 is a map of civic stewardship groups in the area. It shows the clustering of civic organizations reported to conserve, manage, monitor, advocate and educate the public about aspect of the local environment. The map depicts both the location of each group as well as their stewardship sphere, which is their geographic area of activity. In contrast to the number and density of stewardship groups along the Brooklyn waterfront, of the groups that have been active within an quarter mile of the High Line in the past decade, the majority are clustered on or around three public housing complexes in the community: The Chelsea Houses, the Chelsea-Elliott Houses and the

Chelsea Extension. A few civic groups, including the Hudson Guild, a one hundred year old social service organization, are well established and focused on targeting services such as health care, job training and general neighborhood beautification. The meatpackers and warehouse owners are organized as part of an association that centers on concerns such as warehouse docking area, sidewalks and street parking issues. Other civic groups in this area emphasize waterfront or have a specific open space mission such as the Hudson River Watershed Alliance and Friends of Hudson River Park. National environmental organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and The Audubon Society sponsor regular programs at local community centers and schools in this neighborhood. As opposed to the number of community stakeholders interested in the redevelopment of the Brooklyn waterfront, it appears that only a few of these groups were interested in the conversion of the High Line into a public space prior to the establishment of FHL (interview with Lang 2007; Plummer 2007). Friends of the High Line brought a new perspective on open space as an art form and gathering place in this community.

Figure 4-1 A map of environmental stewardship organizations within ¼ mile, ½ mile of the High Line.



Civic Action

The Accidental Rise of Elite Urban Parks Organizations

As previously mentioned, the Chelsea Property Owners became active in an effort to demolish the rail line in the 1980s. The group was comprised of private property owners with land underneath or adjacent to the High Line. Spending millions of dollars on a lobbying campaign to convince the railroad's owner as well as city, state and federal officials to remove the line, by the 1990s the group was making significant progress. During that time, the urban design community, at large, began to take note of the potential to reuse the old train tracks as a public space. Urban designers had begun to write about the High Line in trade publications as well as feature the project in urban design exhibits and public forums (interview with Alexander 2007; Weaver 2007).

Despite the interest of urban designers and artists, Chelsea Property Owners was a formidable group whose mission was more in line with urban economic development and whose membership had close relationships with influential persons in local government. The group's core argument was that removal of the old rail line would create greater opportunities for public and private economic development in the area. A popular slogan from the campaign reflected this sentiment: "Money doesn't grow on trees and last we checked it isn't growing in the weeds of the High Line" (public lecture by Hammond 2007). Friends of the High Line countered claims made by the property owners. They reasoned that the reuse of the High Line would attract significantly more investment to the neighborhood than tearing it down.

Friends of the High Line Co-Founders Robert Hammond and Joshua David met in the late 1990s at a community board meeting where plans for demolishing the High Line

were being discussed. Upon learning there was no organized effort to save the line, Hammond and David befriended each other and began a campaign “out of their kitchens” (public lecture by Hammond 2007). In some ways, their campaign appears almost as accidental as the vegetative overgrowth that grew steadily on the abandoned rail line. However, unlike the vegetation, this local campaign had strong and widespread connections to a human network of information, resources, and materials.

The story of the High Line’s proposed demolition, preservation, and eventual redesign as a public park, caught the attention of international artists, architects, celebrities, business entrepreneurs and writers. At the same time, local historians, railroad buffs, politicians and city planners have been drawn to the cause of saving the rail line (Demochaux, 2005). Hammond has remarked publically, “The High Line project emerged from that same hopeful optimism of the 1990s that gave rise to things like Google” (public lecture by Hammond 2007). According to early supporters of the High Line, those who sought the old rail line’s demise were considered outdated in terms of their ideas for neighborhood revitalization. In addition, the opposition was thought to be greedy and motivated by self-interest rather than public service. In fact, those active in the early campaign to protect the High Line have commented that Mayor Giuliani, because of his unpopularity with many civic activists in New York, played a key role in their success.

It was a rallying point. You could always tell with certain people it was the best way to get them on board. If you mentioned, ‘Yeah, Giuliani wants to tear it down’ then you’d get ‘Oh yeah? Sign me up. We’ve got to fight it!’ (public lecture by Hammond 2007).

Understanding how to target their message, developing creative outreach strategies and harnessing elite business and political networks was critical to the campaign.

Tapping into the 21st Century 'Urban Park Elite'

When recalling the early days of the campaign, Hammond and David nearly always describe their efforts as “unintentional” and attribute the happening to chance (interview with Lang 2007). While Hammond and David may have met by chance with neither having any professional experience in urban planning, politics or real estate development, they did have the right skill set for deploying a successful urban park campaign. Hammond was a part-time artist with experience in marketing and sales. David was a freelance writer who was well versed in the area of art and design. Both had direct experience negotiating, organizing and programming. Both are said to have influential partners in the world of entertainment and media. As such, Hammond and David were able to engage in social networks that included people who had access to power, financial resources and key decision-making capabilities (interview with Lang 2007).

Blending celebrity flourish with a commitment to public service, Hammond and David reached out to their personal networks. They launched a passionate appeal to save the High Line that was imbued with a sense of optimism about city life expressed through great public works of art. Their appeal captivated many influential New Yorkers including Robert Hammond’s college roommate, Gifford Miller, who was then Speaker of the City Council. Mr. Miller is also the son of Lynden Miller, a wealthy and prominent landscape designer in New York City. Several Hollywood actors living in New York City also became enamored with the cause and campaign. For example, local resident and actor Edward Norton became an energetic fund-raiser and official celebrity spokesperson for the project. Mr. Norton is also the grandson of the late James Rouse, a

successful real estate developer and founder of a large and well-known affordable housing foundation. Famed fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg, a long-time resident of the Meatpacking District, contributed her personal time, contacts, studio, and financial resources (interview with Plummer 2007).

Despite a close association with elite decision-makers and renowned personalities, Hammond and David sought to deepen their base of support by appealing to a broader local constituency. Friends of the High Line raised their neighborhood profile by hosting a mix of public street events and art exhibits. The group sponsored an annual street fair that featured unique performances and activities by talented artists. The art exhibits ranged from small, intimate settings in Chelsea's famed art gallery district to larger, public showings at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). Friends of the High Line also sponsored a photo exhibit featuring hundreds of local residents. Accessible on the Friends of the High Line web site, the photo exhibit was intended to celebrate local diversity, democratic voice and encapsulate the spirit of urban living and creativity (interview with Lang 2007).

While the organization was satisfied with its efforts to reach decision-makers and high profile neighborhood personalities, the group was sensitive to the fact that they had not engaged the entire community (interview with Lang 2007). To reach more members of the community, board members began to visit the homes of local residents, including those living in nearby public housing facilities, to talk more intimately about the project. These exchanges were dubbed 'meet and greet' dinners, where an informal and open dialogue took place between FHL and the local community. This type of exchange gave FHL leadership the opportunity to assess local concerns and become familiar with their

constituency (public lecture by Hammond 2007; Lang 2007). Similar to the task force structure and street-corner organizing of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, this approach could be thought of as supplement to or even a replacement of more traditional forms of public meetings and hearings. In this case, it was a private group rather than a public agency soliciting public input and filtering the feedback that they received back to their campaign and key stakeholders.

The Friends of the High went even further in terms of its outreach. In an effort to establish even greater momentum for redesigning the High Line, a competition of ideas for the High Line's public reuse was launched with the intention to engage an international audience. After receiving 720 entries from 36 countries, Hammond publically quipped, "I now say to people, 'Hey, have you heard of us? We're really big in Japan, Holland, and Germany!'" (public lecture by Hammond 2007). In keeping with its notion of capturing the attention of a broad base of potential supports, FHL staged a design exhibit at Grand Central Station where hundreds of thousands of commuters and visitors were invited to comment on submissions from the international ideas competition (interview with Plummer 2007). The group routinely hosted private tours of the High Line for journalists, key decision-makers and potential donors. With the press, FHL was particularly solicitous, seeking out individual reporters to ask how they could position the story of the High Line to appeal to their specific interests (public lecture by Hammond 2007).

Urban Planning Context

Rezoning Paves the Way for the High Line's Success

While the energetic leadership, social networks and story of a defunct rail line in the middle of Manhattan drew the interest of many to the campaign, the groundwork for the redevelopment of the High Line had happened years earlier. Citing the redevelopment of Times Square as a precedent, planners at the New York City Department of City Planning had high hopes for using rezoning mechanisms to transform the area into an arts district reminiscent of other major tourist centers of the City. In an effort to revitalize Times Square in the late 1990s, the Department of City Planning created a zoning mechanism for a new theater sub-district that allowed the transfer of development rights from certain theaters to other sites in the sub-district. This enabled property and business owners in Times Square to renovate vacant buildings, improve streetscapes and provide the type of neighborhood attractions that had once made Times Square a world-famous tourist attraction (interview with Pullman 2009; Singh 2007).

In the area surrounding the High Line, a large portion of Chelsea had been rezoned in 1999 in accordance with the neighborhood's 197-A plan and in hopes of an \$85 million public and private redevelopment of the High Line. The rezoning procedure ensured the preservation of light and air as well as views around the old rail line. This particular rezoning paved the way for the High Line as it encouraged new developments to engage with the park corridor (interview with Singh 2007).

By 2002, Friends of the High Line and the Design Trust for Public Space published a report that also influenced the creation of a special High Line District. In the report, planners proposed that a High Line special district, along with the rezoning plan,

would create the regulatory framework necessary to generate significant tax revenue while satisfying local development interests (interview with Alexander 2007; Wilson 2007)

Levels of Contention

While projected public taxes earnings and private investment opportunities related to the High Line project proved to be an attractive idea to investors and economic planners alike, few organizations such as local community associations began to resent the high priority attention that the High Line was receiving in comparison to other community needs. As part of the review for the 197-A community plan and the new rezoning proposals, civic and block associations had identified redevelopment priorities that included affordable housing projects, transportation improvements, and new outdoor parks and recreational facilities (Design Trust for Public Space, Conard, & Smiley, 2002). A local civic association member remarked, “The High Line is nice, but perhaps because of it we don’t have all the other things that we need in this community” (interview with Comstock 2009). Other civic associations felt silenced as the applause for the High Line by the media and government planners became deafening.

Despite the strong support to save the High Line, the first step in the process of converting the High Line into a park was to legally rule out any chance that it would be demolished. In order for the federal government to approve tearing down the line under the federal Surface Transportation Board, requesting parties were required to provide evidence that adequate resources were available for demolition. Luckily for the High Line’s supporters, the debate over who would finance the demolition languished until 2001. That year marked a city mayoral election and Friends of the High Line worked to

gain support from all the lead candidates including front-runner, Michael Bloomberg. According to city planners, the election of Bloomberg was a critical turning point (interview with McAfee 2007; Singh 2007; Wright 2008).

Many public officials have noted the stark difference between the Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Mayor Michael Bloomberg with regard to urban economic development. Mayor Giuliani's style of economic development has been described by city planners as "unsophisticated" with another official noting, "Giuliani just wanted the revenues and the approach was to sell off everything [publicly owned properties]... get the price, get the highest price in spite of any thoughtful planning" (interview with Singh 2007). Another city representative observed that the project itself appealed to Mayor Bloomberg's multifaceted agenda, which included support for the arts, public education, business, and improving the quality of the local environment (interview with Larson 2007).

The High Line park project also presented an opportunity for Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council to achieve common ground. In 2001, the City Council had passed Resolution 1747 in favor of reusing the line as a public space. The resolution called upon the Governor of New York, the Mayor of New York City, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to obtain a Certificate of Interim Trail Use from the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) as part of the federal rail banking program which was created to support the public reuse of defunct railroad lines (United States Newswire, 2005). The resolution was used to engage the support of federal and state officials as well as to send a strong message of support to the Mayor. The resolution made clear the public expense of tearing down the line in contrast to the benefit of using public funds, in part, to create community and economic benefits. Soon after the

resolution, New York Congressional Representative Jerold Nadler and New York Senators Hilary Clinton and Chuck Schumer became strong advocates of the project and helped to secure federal financing (interview with Plummer 2007).

In many ways, the High Line became the favorite issue of politicians, in part, because they could ascribe to it any number of positive visions for New York City. For example, the international design competition included ideas to convert the High Line into a lap pool, a prison, a prison-park, or a roller coaster – all of which brought significant public interest to the project, yet, the fanciful nature of these designs did not call for serious opposition. As one government staffer reflected, “They were distracting people with crayons” (interview with Hoffman 2007). While developers, decision-makers, politicians and the public alike mused over the design the High Line, Friends of the High Line pressed ahead with legal action to stop the demolition while raising significant private dollars to finance its reconstruction.

Despite the many successful efforts to engage public support and financing, the early opposition to the High Line by the development community was intense and the rail line came very close to destruction. As Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Daniel Doctoroff was quoted in the New York Post by reporter Tom Topousis:

During my first few weeks on the job, I was visited by a number of property owners that insisted that the High Line come down. We were one court decision away from demolition...and now people are calling their buildings the ‘High Line this,’ or the ‘High Line that’ (Topousis, 2007)

The Developers: A Critical Turn to Rebuild the High Line

In addition to the positive interest of Michael Bloomberg as a mayoral candidate and then as Mayor, another critical turn in the City's decision to reuse the High Line as public space was when the real estate community shifted its position from opposition to support. Formerly part of the opposition, developers and property owners who were previously against public reuse of the space, joined local residents, gallery owners, artists and entertainers in their fanciful and artistic ideas for the High Line (public lecture by Hammond 2007). While the artists may have been captivated by the High Line's accidental landscape of wildflowers and grasses, investors were interested in leveraging local rezoning plans in order to make way for new development opportunities in and around the area. Friends of the High Line board members were acutely aware of the need to satisfy private interests. In fact, they had always assumed that support from city leaders would depend up the economic viability of the project (interview with Plummer 2007).

Therefore, the controversy over the High Line may have sent up a lot of smoke but it never actually amounted to much of a fire. The pending lawsuit to demolish the line was settled by the incoming Bloomberg Administration and the real estate community and political elite were in support of High Line reuse. The only factor left to give the Bloomberg Administration pause with regard to its commitment to the project was the terrorist attack on September 11th 2001. City economic development planners who had worked most directly with the financial and real estate community after the attack often described this time as "extremely uncertain" with regard to large-scale public projects (interview with Singh 2007). Although supportive of the project in theory, local

government representatives were cautious of making new commitments using public resources.

At the same time, due to a chronic struggle to secure adequate maintenance funds for parks, representatives from the Parks Department viewed the project more critically than any other department of government. Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe was said to have been “initially cautious, even skeptical” of making agency commitments to support the High Line (interview with Larson 2007). The concern over long-term resources for maintenance was real since the project was a Mayoral directive rather than one that was budgeted from within the department. As one Parks Department representative remarked, “The fear was that after the spotlight faded the department would get stuck with a very expensive liability that, when you look at it, it was really not a lot of open space for the money” (interview with Pullman 2009).

In the final analysis over whether to go forward with the High Line redevelopment, it came down to how the financial resources including real estate taxes and development rights could be leveraged. Similar to the 19th Century and the design of Central Park (Scobey, 2003; Dorceta E Taylor, 1999), elite capitalists and civic boosters were in agreement that a premier urban park such as the High Line rightly belonged in world-class city such as New York. With overwhelming support from the urban elite, Mayor Bloomberg asked his Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Daniel Doctoroff, to assess a final piece of the proposed project: to decide whether or not High Line was economically viable over the long term. Robert Hammond described an exchange between FHL and the Mayor’s Office as follows,

Doctoroff came to us and said, ‘Hey, I don’t care about all these pretty pictures, - we have so many parks and we can barely maintain them as it is.’ So, we did an economic feasibility study. We dipped into the pretty economic pictures that showed it did make financial sense. We said if we could prove that in over twenty years the incremental tax revenues to the city will be greater than the project cost -- even though the city is not going to pay for it and we find that it is actually buildable and you can actually do it, would you get on board? And he said, ‘Yes.’ (public lecture by Hammond 2007)

Development of the Park Goes Forward

Covering an area bounded by Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, from West 30th Street south to West 16th Street, the Special West Chelsea District was approved in 2005 by the City Council. The 2005 rezoning created a High Line Transfer Corridor. The corridor is approximately 100 feet wide and includes the High Line and adjacent lots between West 18th and West 30th Streets. Owners of abutting corridor properties were permitted to transfer their development rights to other designated sites within the special district. A major stipulation of the transfer was that corridor owners must construct stair - or ramp - access to the High Line. In 2008, Friends of the High Line estimated that the special district (also known as the High Line Special District) would eventually generate nearly \$500 million in incremental tax revenue and associated payments (public lecture by Hammond 2007). City planners have estimated that as of 2009, \$22 million has been earned by the city from adjacent property transfers in the special district (interview with Pullman 2009; Rice 2009).

By opening day of the High Line Park in June 2009, Friends of the High Line was able to raise an estimated \$44 million through their capital campaign (interview with Pullman 2009). Ironically, some of the most significant contributions and pledges of support came from former members of the Chelsea Property Owners (public lecture by

Hammond 2007). Successful private parties, marketing, media coverage and direct outreach efforts to wealthy New Yorkers assured local officials and property owners of the long-term intentions of this group and ultimately, local government gave its full support to the project (interview with Pullman 2009; Stone 2007). While not unprecedented, this type of support was unusual relative to other park projects in terms of the timeframe in which contracts and formal partnerships are established. A Parks Department planner commented on this fact:

There were other agreements that we looked at as well, but nothing quite fit. Everything about the High Line is a bit different. Some things are a lot different. Especially that Parks has been building this new park and on the day of the opening it will have a conservancy group managing it. Central Park Conservancy didn't get a contract with Parks until about 15 years ago and that park has been around for over one hundred years (interview with Pullman 2009).

The speed with which FHL was able to legitimize its presence as a stewardship or conservancy group over a public resource may suggest the political and economic importance of this project as well as the notion that hybrid governance structures have become more acceptable forms of urban park planning and development.

Only few short years working on behalf of the High Line, Hammond and David were no longer what Hammond had referred to as 'neighborhood nobodies' (interview with Plummer 2007). They had become local celebrities and tastemakers who gained the attention of New York City's elite who, in turn, made it fashionable and economically astute to support the High Line. Redeveloping the High Line was no longer the pursuit of fanciful artists and urban dreamers. Instead it was considered among New York's politicians and real estate community to be a savvy investment opportunity that doubled as unique public resource.

Contentious Politics on the Horizon?

Prior to the official park opening, United States Senator Hilary R. Clinton attended a groundbreaking ceremony and remarked,

Today, as we celebrate the High Line, a terrific public project, we also celebrate the open collaborative process between communities and their elected leaders that has allowed this project to progress (US States News, 2006)

As part of this collaborative process, Friends of the High Line does more than simply support the park. It manages the park and serves as an advocate for undeveloped portions of the High Line and related issues of community interest. For example, FHL led another campaign to preserve the northern portion of the line known as ‘the Spur,’ from 30th to 34th Streets and located within the West Side Rail Yards. On behalf of its membership, FHL used internal channels of communication with project officials to encourage applicants to the West Side Rail Yards Redevelopment request for proposal to incorporate the High Line extension in their submission (interview with Rice 2009). At the same time, the group used internal networks within the Mayor’s Office and the Department of City Planning to support the city in acquiring the third section of track from the CSX Transportation, Inc. and to develop a comprehensive rezoning plan that includes maintaining the design aesthetic established by the High Line. In May 2010, the City Planning Commission reviewed the city’s application to acquire the line as part of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure. When a city planner was asked what position her office had taken on this new campaign, she lifted her shirt to reveal a “Save the Spur!” t-shirt underneath (interview with Rice 2009).

The High Line’s most contentious battles may emerge after the park has been completed as the Friends of the High Line continue to test their political influence within

the neighborhood. For example, on August 9, 2009, FHL publicly proposed creating a special assessment district taxing residential and commercial property owners in and around the High Line. Referred to as the High Line Improvement District, the mechanism is similar to a Business Improvement District (BID) where funds are used to benefit the entire community. However, funds collected from residential and commercial property assessments in the district would go directly to park improvements rather than a general community fund.

Two weeks later, on August 21, the High Line Improvement District proposal was put on hold after concerns were raised by the local community. A group of homeowners had begun a petition against the proposed district. The group reportedly polled nearly 200 local residents and business owners finding the majority were vehemently opposed to the idea (Hedlund, 2009). While many acknowledged that the High Line had created a community benefit, they felt that local property owners should not have to pay disproportionately for a public park.

The petitioners harkened back to other community concerns that in their view had been neglected in lieu of the High Line development. These included issues of local poverty, food security, neighborhood diversity and affordable housing. Friends of the High Line promptly issued a retraction on their web site stating that the proposed district would not be actively pursued and was officially tabled for future discussions. Similar to the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway's direct dealings with contentious local business owners along Kent Avenue, FHL served as a buffer for community complaints against an urban planning procedure that is typically led by government. However, unlike the Brooklyn case where contentious issues spread out along the entire waterfront, the

tensions created by the High Line were concentrated along the line and limited to a smaller group of local residents and property owners.

As a new constituency of artists, gallery owners, hoteliers and restaurateurs have settled in the neighborhood, Friends of the High Line weaved them together into a storyline of post-industrial revitalization fueled by egalitarian notions of public space and the redemptive qualities of nature. In the process, the High Line became an important symbol of neighborhood revival as well as urban wealth, design and power. As Adam Sternberg wrote in *New York Magazine*,

...The High Line is, according to its converts (and they are legion), the happily-ever-after at the end of an urban fairy tale. It's a flying carpet; our generation's Central Park, something akin to Alice in Wonderland...through the keyhole and you're in a magical place. It's also the end product of a perfect confluence of powerful forces: radical dreaming, dogged optimism, neighborhood anxiety, design mania, real-estate opportunism, money, celebrity, and power. In other words, it's a 1.455-mile, 6.7-square-acre, 30-foot high symbol of exactly what it means to be living in New York right now (Sternbergh, 2007).

While hailed as the quintessential example of a new urban park, the governing structure of the park is not particularly new to urban planning. After all, Central Park was created with similar tactics that drew upon a creative use of urban design, the media and social networks (Rosenzweig, 1992). The case of the High Line is reminiscent of Scobey's (2003) 'bourgeois urbanism' where civic boosterism of the 19th Century was grounded in cultural values, design ideals and political action. As such, one finds the New York real estate market is the engine for spatial change led by an urban park elite comprised of civic-minded capitalists able to broker deals among the highest levels of government. The High Line is a product of elite social relationships and market conditions.

Sociometric analysis of civic, government and business groups engaged in some aspect of the High Line's design, promotion, construction and maintenance reveals that Friends of the High Line is acting as a central node in this network (see Figure 4-2).

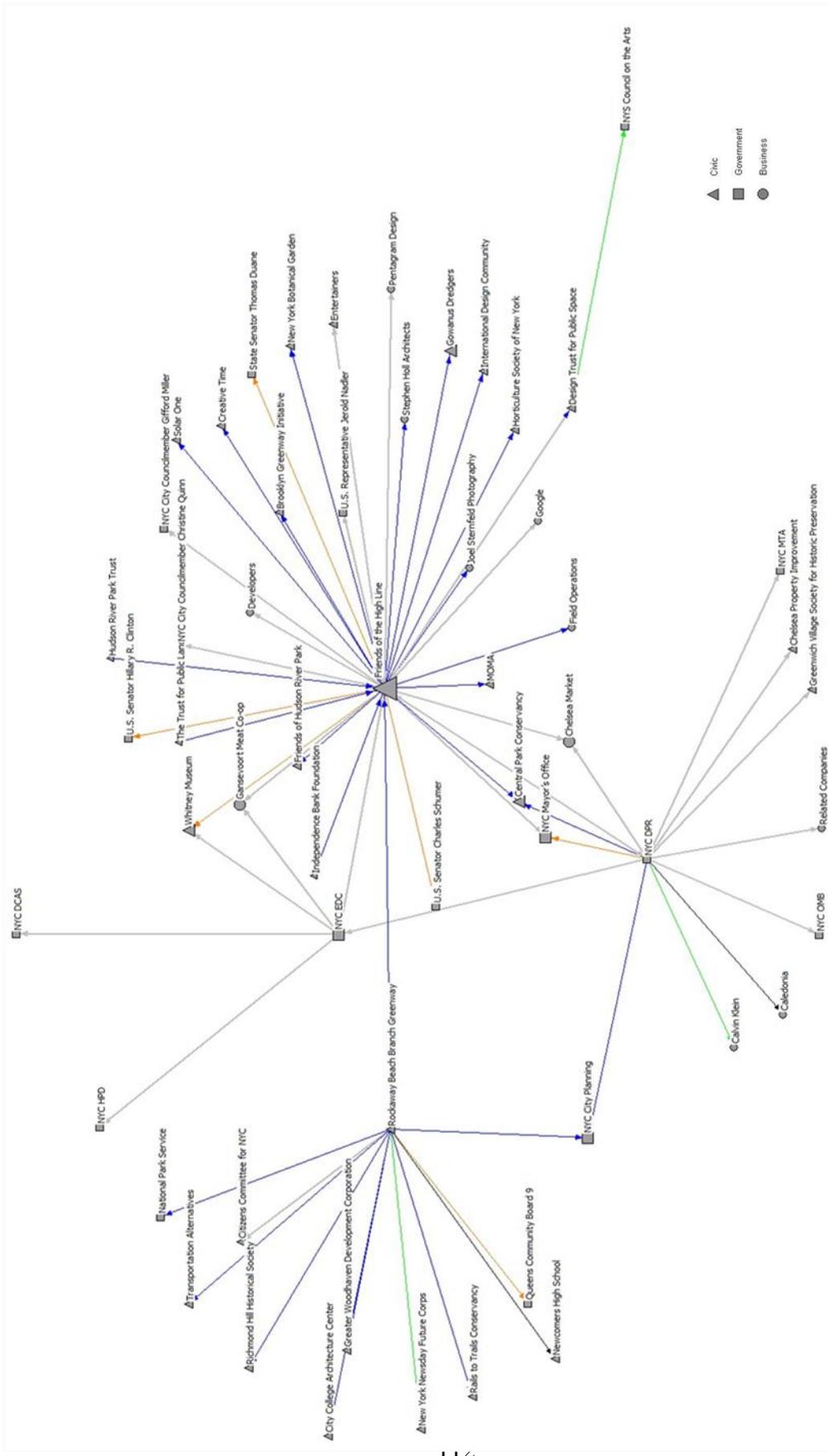


Figure 4-2: Social networks of civic, government, and business organizations involved in the redevelopment of the High Line.

A highly professionalized group, FHL is comprised of an alliance of influential decision-makers able to work closely with high levels of government and private donors. FHL continues to position itself as an external, civic group advocating for enhancements to the High Line and related ventures to improve local community development. As a civic group, FHL is a modern-day, professionalized park conservancy comprised of what Dorceta Taylor (2009) has referred to in the 19th Century as the “urban park elite.” The group is reminiscent of the civic-minded capitalists and 19th Century boosters who made significant financial contributions to Central Park while standing to benefit from its construction and location. Members used the similar tactics of deploying social networks in politics and the media to accomplish its goals. Although FHL and Parks officials have made occasional mention of the area being underserved by parks, the surrounding neighborhood is not lacking in open space (Armstrong et al., 2009). FHL’s motivations are inconsistent with those made by environmental justice advocates where there is a clear claim of social harm and discrimination.

The elite status of those in support of the project and the opportunity to capitalize on local real estate development has been a significant factor in the groups’ successful negotiations with government. Interesting data that supports this claim is found within the network diagram as FHL is connected to a group in Queens known as the Rockaway Beach Branch Greenway Committee. A representative of FHL had helped to advise the Queens-based group using lessons learned from Manhattan.

Similar to the High Line, the Rockaway Beach Branch line is a defunct, elevated train track that runs through the Woodhaven and Richmond Hill neighborhoods in Queens (Sandke, 2006). The Rockaway rail line is twice the size of the High Line with

forty-five years of vegetative succession growing along sections of the line. As a member of this civic group commented, “It’s a virtual forest.” However, in contrast to FHL, the Queens group feels as if government has “abandoned them” in their cause (interview with Sheriden 2007). In this sense one finds that favorable market conditions as well as the presence of an elite urban park class make a powerful case for urban park development. Absent these conditions, as in the case of the Rockaway rail line, it becomes rather challenging for groups to gain a foothold in urban park and environmental planning.

Hybrid Governance and Project Outcomes

It is ironic that while evidence presented in this case suggests the High Line to be a strong version of hybrid governance, Friends of the High Line was initially reluctant to work with city agencies and in particular, the Department of Parks and Recreation. The group was hesitant to turn over any aspect of their design to a city agency fearing that if the project were left to government alone, the High Line would never become a world-class, public park. Staff members attribute this apprehensiveness to the uncertainty of city budgets rather than professionalized expertise within the agency (interview with Lang 2007). In addition, FHL staff has mentioned that a formal government partnership might force the group to adopt standardized designs that would diminish the unique nature of the project. The group also feared that creative innovation would be stymied by inefficient bureaucratic processes. Finally, one FHL staff member remarked that she identified their organization with a “grassroots organizing effort,” suggesting that this was critical for establishing legitimacy within the private sector (interview with Plummer 2007).

At the same time, Friends of the High Line was purposeful about arrangements with property owners, businesses, and residents fearing that if these relationships were not well managed, the park project would be exploited (public lecture by Hammond 2007). Exploitation of the High Line by name and image was a serious concern to the group. Similar to Central Park, the High Line is a public entity and as such, cannot be trademarked. FHL staff members have remarked that part of the impetus to expand its local, civic network arose from the fact that the High Line's image was vulnerable to reproduction and misuse by other entities. By establishing their organization as the lead governing body over the High Line, FHL was able to control and protect its public image. Ultimately, Friends of the High Line felt that they had a moral claim to the project and its future governance.

Even today, we have no legal claim on the High Line. The city would never do it but they could cut us out completely. Really, what we have is a moral claim. And I think in a lot of ways that's what non-profits have and it can be more valuable than the legal agreements (public lecture by Hammond)

While a moral claim is important for early stages of organizing and raising funds, it was the technocratic expertise of government that Friends of the High Line needed for project implementation. By the time of the project groundbreaking in 2005, the group had virtually no experience constructing or managing a public park facility. Due to the project's complex design and procurement procedures, the Parks department dedicated two full-time senior staff members from the planning and capital construction divisions to oversee the project. And because of its eventual co-management with the Parks Department, the agency made long-term plans to appoint a High Line Park Administrator

(interview with Pullman 2009). It was this coupling of experienced urban park planners with civic boosters that transformed the structure of FHL from advocate to public steward.

As the project was highly visible and would attract a great amount of criticisms if it failed, government planners became active in training and nurturing FHL staff (interview with Rice 2009). The first two construction phases were expected to cost \$152.3 million dollars. In addition to private funds raised by Friends of the High Line, the City of New York committed \$112.2 million, the federal government provided \$20.3 million and the State of New York contributed \$400,000 to the project (interview with Pullman 2009). The Mayor's Office held a High Line Task Force meeting every Tuesday for over a year to ensure efficient project planning and that opportunities to leverage resources from the private and public sector were not overlooked. High Line Task Force members worked to resolve issues using the full administrative and political power of the Mayor's Office. The Friends of the High Line was the only civic organization invited to participate in the task force. As public and private funds for the project were secured, both parties began work on a long-term, partnership agreement (interview with Pullman 2009).

An Official Steward of the Park

In June of 2009, the first section of the High Line was opened to the public. Just prior to the opening, Friends of the High Line finalized its legal partnership with the City of New York. The group now had more than a moral claim to the project. Friends of the High Line were now recognized as the official steward of the park and as such, they were expected to fulfill certain obligations.

Although certainly unique in many aspects including its design and stewardship, the story of the High Line is positioned with a long history of urban park planning and development. As the movement for public parks evolved in the 20th Century, the private sector involvement in the management of these spaces waned and the state became the public steward of parklands. The case of the High Line suggests that private stewardship has come full circle as local government remains critical, yet, except for the visible presence of Urban Park Rangers on site, it has become more of a technical, ‘behind the scenes’ partner. Instead, FHL has become the ‘public face’ of the park as it manages all public programs and communications related to the park.

There is evidence of institutional co-mingling between Friends of the High Line and the Parks Department that suggests a growing integration between public and private stewardship. Parks Department officials remarked that FHL has adopted government tendencies, such as becoming more conservative in their spending as the group gained a greater sense of the costs associated with implementation and maintenance (interview with Pullman 2009). At the time of this writing, FHL has committed to raising \$50 million dollars of private funding toward park development while signing onto a licensing agreement with the Parks Department that establishes an annual operating budget of approximately \$3 million dollars. FHL will contribute \$2 million and the Parks Department will commit \$1 million to the park’s annual budget.

As part of this agreement, the Parks Department grants FHL the ability to operate or identify operators for the park’s three main concession areas. The City will receive the first \$250,000 of any revenue that is generated by these concessions and FHL may receive the remainder up to \$1 million dollars. The City and FHL will split any funds

that exceed \$1 million dollars (interview with Pullman 2009; Rice 2009). The Parks Department played a strong role in not only defining the partnership but also leveraging the private sector in a formal agreement. This is not unlike other cases of environmental governance where government creates a planning space for civic or private groups not only to contribute ideas but core decision-making and use of financial resources.

When compared to other urban park partnerships in New York City, the High Line's total operating and maintenance costs of \$3 million annually fall below sites such as Brooklyn Bridge Park (+\$14million) and Hudson River Park (+\$11million) (Piriani, 2007). Similar to Central Park which generates approximately \$100 million in annual revenues (D. E. Taylor, 2009), the High Line may become a highly effective and efficient collaborative as park revenues increase through a growing number of visitors to the park and the surrounding area.

It would be inaccurate to describe the role of the government as simply following along with the demands of elite urban capitalists, however, city officials did not play a particularly proactive role in redesigning the High Line until the real estate and development community was fully committed to the High Line project. What had been a highly contentious issue among activists, politicians and developers was reshaped by FHL into a shared ideal. Those working on behalf of the Bloomberg administration acted in an entrepreneurial manner on issues that directly led to the creation of the High Line Park as an economically viable and high profile public enhancement to the city. Despite their keen interest in the project, the Parks Department leadership balanced enthusiasm with obligations to manage an entire system of public parks. As such, representatives of the Parks Department showed strong leadership in acknowledging the need for a private

sector model of support for new parks while entering into a new governing arrangement that did not overburden its capacity to provide for parks in other neighborhoods.

The collaboration between the City and the Friends of the High Line is representative of a strong case of hybrid governance. A shared vision and accountability is solidified through a formal legal agreement that specifies rules regarding decision-making and shared financial and personnel resources. These efforts have led to a form of hybrid governance where civil society and the state both share responsibility for the resource but in this case, an urban park elite leads the charge. This case differs slightly from the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway because FHL has been granted more authority over the management of the park. In Brooklyn, the Department of Transportation is ultimately responsible for the greenway. The finding that civic groups are often the ‘first responders’ (L. K. Campbell, 2006) or take the lead on matters of environmental concern differs from early ecological modernization theory that suggests state and market actors are the driving forces of change. At the same time, findings from this case confirm claims made by ecological modernization theorists (Mol, 2000) and others (Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009) that this certain civic environmental groups are becoming more formalized and professionalized.

CHAPTER FIVE

The South Bronx Greenway

Similar to the High Line and the Brooklyn Waterfront, the South Bronx case involves an area that has been zoned primarily for industrial space and until recently was considered an undesirable location for creating new residential and open space investments along its waterfront. For example, the NYC Department of City Planning's 1993 Greenway Plan emphasized the need to establish greenway routes along New York City's shoreline communities (Department of City Planning, 1993). The South Bronx waterfront, along the Hunts Point Peninsula, was not included in the plan. In fact, the proposed greenway route bypassed the Hunts Point area entirely.

According to a city planner who had worked on the original 1993 greenway plan, the Hunts Point peninsula was better known for its heavy industrial use rather than its potential for parks, open spaces and recreational facilities (interview with Stone 2007). The Hunts Point Peninsula is home to one of the largest wholesale food distribution centers in the world: the Hunts Point Cooperative Market. The area surrounding the market is replete with salvage yards, auto repair shops, and truck depots. In the nearby Port Morris neighborhood, a large fertilizer plant and other noxious facilities line the waterfront. Hunts Point residences and small business are nestled within a tangled web of highway interchanges and dedicated truck routes. Prostitution remains a notorious by-product of elevated highway interchanges and off-ramps with the subject of this activity becoming part of Brent Owen's 1996 documentary entitled, "Hookers at The Point."

Authors of the 1993 Greenway Plan have acknowledged that it was never intended to be an exact blueprint but rather a starting point for local community planning.

As in the case of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, planners fully expected that local site conditions and stakeholder interests would eventually reshape the proposed greenway street routings (interview with Stone 2007). However, in the case of Hunts Point no one ever imagined that a greenway was either feasible or desirable. City planners were deeply concerned that a greenway in this area would be unsafe for riders and create security risks for local businesses in the Hunts Point Market (interview with Larson 2007).

While industrial use dominates the area, the Hunts Point community includes a modest section of single and multi-family homes. The residential population, half of which receives government assistance, has grown since the 1980s to approximately 46,000 residents in 2000. The median household income in 2000 was \$21,394 making Hunts Point the poorest area among the three project case studies (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). In fact, the area has the lowest median household income in the entire city and the highest poverty rate. Compared with the rest of New York City neighborhoods, the Mott Haven/Hunts Point community has the highest number of asthma hospitalizations (per 1,000 persons) and the largest percentage of disabled residents. The area has the highest percentage of those aged 25 or older living in the community without a high school diploma. In addition, Mott Haven/Hunts Point ranks as the fourth highest area of the city with households with children under 18 years old (Armstrong et al., 2009).

Surprisingly, it is one of the top New York City communities where residential units are located within 1/3 mile of a public park. The majority of Hunts Point residents and workers are located within walking or biking distance of the largest freshwater river in the city: the Bronx River (Armstrong et al., 2009). However, the physical space

between local residences and the river is entangled with busy interchanges, truck routes, and broken sidewalks (interview with Campbell 2007; Palacios 2007; Wise 2007).

Perhaps because of this struggle over the use of residential and industrial space, community organizations, economic development corporations and environmental advocates became active in the South Bronx during the 1990s (interview with McAfee 2007).

A Brief History

Environmental Collaboration in the South Bronx

Divided by the Bronx River, the Bronx has an extensive waterfront that includes the Hudson River, the East River, the Long Island Sound and the Harlem River, a tidal strait that separates the Bronx from Manhattan and connects the Hudson and East Rivers. The Bronx River flows for 23-miles from suburban Westchester and through the Bronx making a long run through neighborhoods in the South Bronx before emptying out into the East River. For the past fifty years, the South Bronx section was notoriously trash-strewn and its riverbanks populated by heavy industrial use (Bleyer, 2006; NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy 2009; Richman & Egbert, 2002). Not surprisingly many long-time residents of Hunts Point, Longwood and Port Morris either were unaware of the river or if so, avoided it entirely (interview with Palacios 2007; Wise 2007).

In the late 1990s, a group of citizens and representatives from community development organizations including The Point Community Development Corporation, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, the National Parks Service River and Trails Program, Partnerships for Parks, and staff from U.S. Congressman Jose Serrano's Office

began to concentrate their efforts on cleaning up the southern portion of the river. By the late 1990s, the Bronx River Alliance, a not-for-profit organization working in collaboration with the Parks Department and with many public and private sectors groups, was making great strides in restoring the river's health.² A representative of the Bronx River Alliance observed, "It was like when environmentalists and hunters find that they have the same things in common, we too found that the river and the environment brought together rather unlikely partners" (interview with Wallace 2007). According to Stephanie Donovan, a planner and long-time advisor to the project, the Bronx River Greenway could be attributed to a decentralized, networked organizational structure.

There was never a day when anybody went, sort of, all the way up the chain of command and said, 'Hey, we're thinking of doing a master plan for the Bronx River Greenway. What do you think?' There was already a plan before we got any funding or official sanctions and then we just coupled funding together from state, city and federal sources, piece by piece (interview with Donovan 2007).

Civic Action

Rising up from the Streets: Origins of the South Bronx Greenway

Without knowing the history of the Bronx River Greenway and the South Bronx Greenway, one might assume that the latter is simply an extension of the former. After all, the South Bronx Greenway begins at Willow Avenue and 132nd Street and continues northeast to where Lafayette Avenue ends at Riverside Park in the area where the Bronx River Greenway ends (NYC Economic Development Corporation et al., 2006). The South Bronx Greenway is anchored along the Bronx River Waterfront yet extends onto streets and sidewalks within the neighborhood of Hunts Point. The Bronx River

² The restoration of the Bronx River has inspired a number of other urban restoration projects along the waterfront including the Bronx River Greenway, the South Bronx Greenway, Concrete Plant Park, Hunts Point Riverside Park, Barretto Point Park and the recent Parks Department acquisition of North and South Brother Islands.

Greenway is located primarily on Parks Department property while the South Bronx Greenway transverses a wide range of property jurisdictions including that of several city and state agencies. Planner Stephanie Donovan stated there was a clear difference between the two greenways.

The South Bronx Greenway is really quite different from the Bronx River Greenway. Its point of origin came not from the river but from the streets with the focal point being the people who live in this South Bronx community (interview with Donovan 2007)

The notion of a South Bronx Greenway would emerge through combined efforts of local civic organizations dedicated to improving conditions in and around the Hunts Point Peninsula (see Figure 5-1). Organizations such as Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, The Point Community Development Corporation, Sustainable South Bronx, Mothers on the Move, Rocking the Boat and the Bronx River Alliance were founded in response to a growing concern over unsafe and unjust conditions in the community. Many of these organizations engaged in local environmental stewardship activities as a way to address community development objectives.

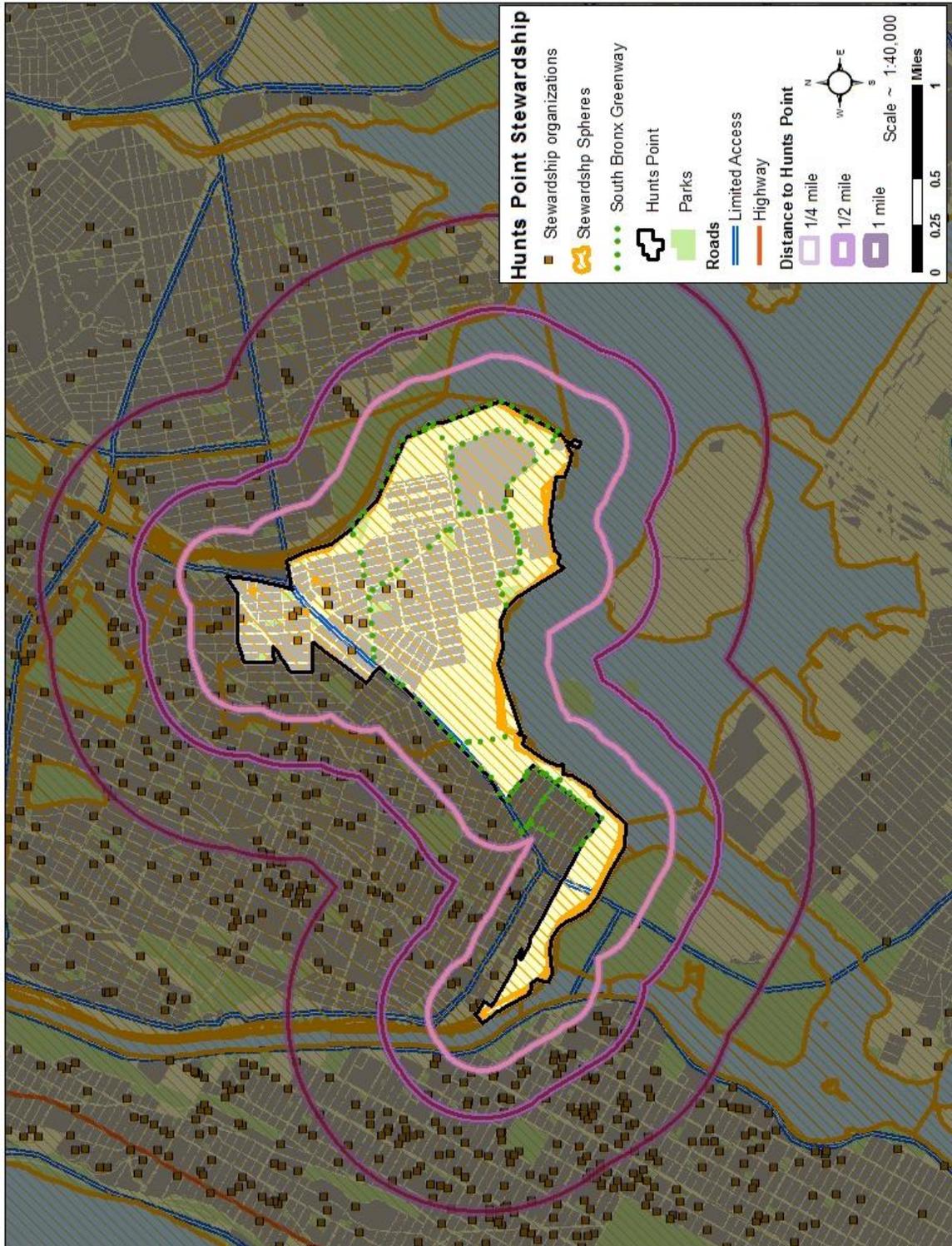


Figure 5-1 A map of environmental stewardship organizations within 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile of the South Bronx Greenway.

Surprisingly, the density of stewardship groups is much greater in and around Hunts Point than in the other two case examples. As opposed to the High Line and the Brooklyn Waterfront, one finds a significant increase in stewardship organizations located within the industrial areas which suggests that the concern over environmental quality and restoration is of high importance to those living and working in this South Bronx community.

When asked about the history of stewardship in Hunts Point, local planners and advocates agree that community has had a long history of civic activists who have tried to restore the South Bronx (interview with Campbell 2007; Larson 2007; Patel 2007; Wise 2007). “Don’t Move, Improve!” was a popular saying that epitomized the work of civic organizations in the aftermath of the 1970s fiscal crisis (interview with Palacios 2007). The impulse for a South Bronx Greenway is said to have been response to a long history of community based efforts to improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents (interview with Donovan 2007; Wallace 2007). Community development groups such as Banana Kelly, Mothers on the Move, Nos Quedamos/We Stay, and The Point Community Development Corporation have focused their efforts on affordable housing, youth and community development and often combined this with environmental stewardship activities such as clean-ups, community gardening and tree planting.

One long-time government policymaker noted that what has fueled the civic revitalization of the South Bronx has been frustration over waiting for change.

In this community, we just can’t wait years for industry to relocate or for the exact science to tell us what to do or for other help and funding to arrive. We’ve just got to go ahead and go with what we’ve got. And if that means that we put a park near a noxious facility, so be it.” (interview with Campbell 2007)

Regardless of political or economic conditions, stewardship groups within Hunts Point Peninsula have forged ahead with ideas, plans and projects. Plans and innovative ideas have drawn support from private foundations and respect from government decision-makers. One business owner who relocated his business from the Meatpacking district in Manhattan to the Hunts Point Fish Market commented that he found civic efforts in Hunts Point to be quite inspiring.

It's really the last frontier, a place where you can still dream, see change around you and be part of things. The community, the businesses around here, a lot of the government representatives... everyone up here is really open to ideas and willing to work together with you. It wasn't that way back in Manhattan (interview with Rollins 2007)

In direct contrast with the High Line and, to some extent, the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, the South Bronx Greenway is viewed by local planners and supporters as a new open space project created for local residents and workers rather than recreational and environmental enthusiasts living in other parts of the city or tourists (interview with Hoover 2007; Wise 2007). While the specific history detailing how the South Bronx Greenway was developed will be discussed later in this chapter, it is important to understand first that it originated as part of a larger context of long-standing community activism. This activism has been described by many in the Hunts Point community as part of a moral claim that gave rise to issues of environmental justice as well as community health and economic prosperity (interview with Campbell 2007). While the High Line was becoming an international urban design attraction, the South Bronx Greenway was positioned as a highly creative urban design through which to organize and inspire the local community. By getting the community out into the streets, surrounded by new plantings and good urban design, residents might strengthen local

efforts to create safe streets, improve transportation, address issues of poverty and clean-up the environment (interview with Palacios 2007).

Urban Planning Context

For many years, residents living on and around the Hunts Point Peninsula have felt isolated from the Manhattan job sector, diverse social networks, quality recreational facilities and new educational opportunities (interview with Campbell 2007; Palacios 2007; Riggs 2007; Wise 2007). It was important to those planning the South Bronx Greenway that the project would become a tangible link not only to the “nature” of the nearby Bronx River but also to other economic and social opportunities in the Bronx and Manhattan. This desire to use physical design as a means to foster new social and economic connections between communities was not unlike the efforts taking place along the Brooklyn Waterfront. In the case of the South Bronx, government planners and local activists alike seemed to attribute to the greenway any number of functions including improving air and water quality, creating local jobs and changing the social identity of the poor (interview with Donovan 2007; McAfee 2007; Patel 2007; Wise 2007; Wright 2008). As a federal policy-maker remarked, “There is now a rising tide of expectations in this community” (interview with Campbell 2007). For many living and working in a low-income community historically burdened by infrastructure that favored industry over people, these expectations were part of a moral claim. Citing hospitalization rates due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and sharing stories of untimely deaths and family hardships due to conditions of extreme poverty, the civic community characterized projects such as the greenway to be essential for improving the physical, mental and financial health of urban residents (interview with Wise 2007).

The South Bronx Greenway was more than just a clever urban design. For government and civic groups alike it came to symbolize the beginning of a new South Bronx community. As the waterfront became a focal point of 21st Century redevelopment in New York, planners at the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) had an interest in projects that highlighted waterfront reuse. Under contract by Small Business Services to manage much of the New York City waterfront, EDC planners took the lead on convening working groups in designated waterfront redevelopment areas throughout the city. One of the first redevelopment initiatives of Mayor Michael Bloomberg was to identify neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs of New York City that might be particularly attractive to new economic development planning. It has been said by city economic planners that Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff approached Borough President Adolfo Carrion and the two decided that the Hunts Point Peninsula would be an important area to target for revitalization (interview with Wright 2008). Many civic groups welcomed EDC involvement. As a quasi-governmental agency, EDC was not subject to onerous procurement regulations and design standards that are required of city agencies such as the Department of Transportation or the Parks Department (interview with McAfee 2007; Wilson 2007). In fact, representatives of local civic groups commented that while working with EDC staff, they were surprised by their openness toward new ideas and over time, grew confident that plans would be implemented in a timely manner (interview with Patel 2007; Riggs 2007).

In 2004, the Economic Development Corporation issued the Hunts Point Vision Plan (Economic Development Corporation, 2004). Although the area was considered

isolated from other areas of the Bronx, as well as the rest of the city, the Hunts Point community was re-envisioned as a destination for urban bikers, hikers and boaters in addition to making improvements such as parks and open spaces that would benefit the local residents. The Hunts Point Market was imagined as a place for food enthusiasts and Manhattan-based chefs to frequent while increasing the number of jobs available in the community. This plan would require a significant update to the Hunts Point Market including state-of-the art enhancements that could attract and retain anchor businesses. Weaving its way around the Market, through the community and connecting new parks and recreation facilities, the South Bronx Greenway logically became a central organizing principal for the Hunts Point Vision Plan (interview with Gonzalez 2009; Wright 2008).

Even at the time of the release of the vision plan, planners agreed that the challenges faced by the Hunt Point community were very different than those in other parts of the city where similar plans were being constructed (interview with Hoover 2007; Whittner 2007; Wright 2008). Unlike the area around the High Line, the residents of Hunts Point are predominately low income making it difficult to raise private sector resources. There are many successful businesses located within the Hunts Point Market; however, city planners and local activists feel that the relationship between the market and the community has yet to evolve into a shared vision and partnership (interview with McAffe 2007; Wallace 2007). As landlords, city planners could not change the terms of existing lease agreement. However, planners could change the terms of required contributions from new leaseholders such as Anheuser-Busch, a beer manufacturer who established a new facility in the market and contributed \$1 million to the development of

the greenway and related local amenities (interview with McAfee 2007). This type of contribution is appreciated by planners but is atypical in practice. In fact, with regard to the developing the South Bronx Greenway, local planners and officials have advised advocates not to “overwhelm” the older business leaseholders in the market with “too many sudden changes” (interview with Campbell 2007; Fitzsimmons 2008; Gonzalez 2009).

Not unlike the Brooklyn Waterfront, aside from the maritime industry, local businesses in Hunts Point range in size and act independently from other private sector organizations. While there is a South Bronx Economic Development Corporation and a local Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation, business members were uncertain of how the greenway and other open spaces would change the nature of their businesses. (interview with Campbell 2007). In Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative focused its message and joined the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. Their intent was to be persistent in gaining the trust and support of many local businesses. In the South Bronx, there was no clear organizational entity responsible for the promotion of the South Bronx Greenway. At the same time, because the greenway design was used by city planners to physically link other features of the Hunts Point Vision Plan, the project became enmeshed within a much larger context of economic development.

Implementing the South Bronx Greenway, which had begun to encapsulate all sorts of community benefits, would require a private partnership. As the author of original proposal to develop the greenway, Majora Carter, as Founder and Executive Director a local not-for-profit environmental justice organization known as Sustainable South Bronx (SSBx), took the lead on private sector partnership for the South Bronx

Greenway. Early in its history, SSBx experienced success in joining citizen activist groups to defeat the new construction of a solid waste transfer station in Hunts Point. The group's position was to support innovative, ecologically minded development strategies rather than to continue allowing noxious land uses into the Hunts Point community. Sustainable South Bronx posited the idea of parks, greenways, green roofs, job training and business development as essential components of the area's social, environmental and economic recovery. As a demonstration of this belief, SSBx created the BEST Program where local residents are trained and hired as stewards of new street trees, parks, green roofs and planted areas along the proposed greenway (interview with Wise 2007).

Staff members and supporters of SSBx take pride in their ability to partner with government as well as being a strong advocate for environmental justice. As one former staff member stated, "we are both a reasonable ally and a force to be reckoned with..." (Interview with Wise 2007). Still, the capacity of this organization to support a private component of the plan was questionable by city officials due, in part, to their activist orientation, lack of large-scale management experience as well as inconsistent funding (interview with Campbell 2007; Gonzalez 2009; Hoover 2007; Larson 2007; McAfee 2007; Palacios 2007; Whittner 2007; Wright 2008). As an organization Sustainable South Bronx had become conflated with the strong personality of its founder. Ms. Carter is a self-determined and highly charismatic leader who, at certain times during the development of the greenway, drew out as many opponents as she did supporters of her work. Contentious politics are problematic, as public and private funders believe that

neighborhood change requires a broader network of public and private organizations as well as a long-term, comprehensive business plan. As one foundation officer remarked,

I was up in the Bronx recently and actually tried to encourage beefing up the administration of some of the Sustainable South Bronx programs because it can't just be about personality, it has to be about building an institution, and building a board of trustees. You're not going to sustain yourself over time unless you put the time and attention to building infrastructure that you need to carry something forward. Again, I think that remarkable things have been accomplished in the South Bronx, but the issues are fundamentally different than in the case of the High Line (interview with Whittner 2007).

In the case of Sustainable South Bronx, the organization struggled to transition from protests and campaigns tactics to managing long-term public programs. This dual approach became problematic as Majora Carter grew in stature becoming a well-known urban environmental activist who had begun to travel abroad while her organization expanded commitments to a variety of local programs and projects. In contrast, the Friends of the High Line and the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative were advocacy groups interested in developing a base of local support for a discrete project.

As opposed to the High Line and the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, Sustainable South Bronx's campaign went beyond the cause of the South Bronx Greenway and as such, it was a challenge to raise a base level of private support for its various programs and projects. In addition, some of the tactics used by Sustainable South Bronx offended those whom they needed to cultivate a base level of support, namely, government officials and planners.

Levels of Contention

Turf Wars, Broken Trust and No Money for the Poor

Despite the fact that the South Bronx Greenway was located in one of the poorest communities in New York City, one of the most significant points of contention over the greenway was not actually about financial resources. The Hunts Point Plan was released during a time when planners were confident that the rising real estate market would provide the public and private sector resources for local redevelopment in the South Bronx (interview with Singh 2007; Wright 2008). Later, during the economic recession of 2008, there were delays in redevelopment projects particularly in marginal areas such as the South Bronx where prices were dependent upon speculative markets (Armstrong et al., 2009). However, the indecision over the development of the South Bronx Greenway was spawned by tensions associated with a complicated set of claims made by local activists and government representatives over which organization would take lead in directing the project.

The Turf War

In 1999, Majora Carter wrote a successful \$1.25 million federal transportation proposal to conduct feasibility study for the South Bronx Greenway. Described by many as ‘the local lore,’ nearly all respondents for this study report that Ms. Carter developed the greenway proposal while she was working at The Point, a local community development organization in Hunts Point. The Executive Director of The Point at that time was Paul Lipson who is now the Chief of Staff of United States Congressman Jose Serrano (D-NY). Born and raised in the South Bronx and now representing the district,

Congressman Serrano is an active and powerful member on the House Appropriations Committee.

Lipson and Carter were fully invested in devising creative strategies to address the economic and social ills that plagued this South Bronx community. The understanding of many key stakeholders is that the two co-workers had disagreements (interviews with Fitzsimmons 2008; Gonzalez 2009; Hoover 2007; Riggs 2007; Wise 2007; Wright 2008) and Carter, eager to expand her own ideas around environmental justice and sustainable development, resigned from The Point and established a new community-based, non-profit known as Sustainable South Bronx (SSBx).

As one staff person at SSBx stated, “And with that, she simply took the greenway with her to Sustainable South Bronx. The Point continues to maintain a stake in the project, but it’s really in name only” (interview with Riggs 2007). Not long after the establishment of Sustainable South Bronx, Paul Lipson began work as Congressman Serrano’s local Chief of Staff. No account can be given of governance and the South Bronx Greenway without an understanding of this entangled personal and organizational history because it has served defined how government as well as other civic groups view and interact with issues of environmental stewardship in Hunts Point.

Congressman Serrano is often referred to the ‘Godfather of the Bronx River,’ by those who acknowledge his long-time financial support for the restoration of the river as well as his partnership in advocating for new parks and open spaces in the community. His office estimates that from 1999 to 2005, the Congressman was responsible for bringing nearly \$25 million dollars of public investment to the restoration of the Bronx River (interview with Campbell 2007). A project planner reflected on this fact noting

that on one celebratory occasion, Congressman Serrano was said to proclaim, “In Puerto Rico, it’s not Christmas without the pork!” (Interview with Donovan 2007).

However, Serrano’s staff maintains that the Congressman is more than a person who “writes big checks” (interview with Campbell 2007). Congressman Serrano is said to believe fundamentally in the social and economic benefits of improving the urban environment (interview with Donovan 2007; Drake 2007; Gonzalez 2009; Hoover 2007; Stone 2007). As an example of his commitment to environmental restoration, a member of his staff recalled the ‘Golden Ball Festival’ where an enormous golden sphere, inscribed with images depicting community life and urban nature representing the vitality of the Bronx, is ceremoniously floated down the Bronx River. During one of the first annual celebrations, the Congressman was likened to Sisyphus, the Greek god who struggles to overcome his endless task, as he is said to have grabbed hold of the Golden Ball and enthusiastically rolled it up and down the steeply sloped streets of the Hunts Point community (interview with Campbell 2007). Further evidence of the Congressman’s commitment is reflected in a proactive planning staff that has continued to keep up the political momentum to revitalize the South Bronx through financial support to local groups and helping to facilitate open space efforts (interview with Wallace 2007).

However, representatives of several advocacy groups as well as city agencies have mentioned that the prolonged turf war between Congressman Serrano’s office and Carter had, at one time, hampered the flow of open space planning in the South Bronx. Although many aspects of the dispute remain unclear, tensions arose from objections raised by Carter over government and private sector redevelopment proposals in the

South Bronx including the New York City Department of Corrections 2006 proposal for a 2,000 bed detention facility on Oak Point and taking of city parkland for the construction of a new baseball stadium for the New York Yankees (interview with Wise 2007).

While stakeholders from non-profit groups and government agencies alike have acknowledged the important accomplishments of Majora Carter, some feel that she has, at times, been unfair when she has directed public criticism toward particular government officials and staff members (interview with Hoover 2007; Larson 2007; Wright 2008). As a result, city planners have acknowledged feelings of distrust or an awkward tension as they participate with Carter on public task forces and working groups (interview with Fitzsimmons 2008; Riggs 2007; Wright 2008).

At the same time, the notion that Ms. Carter is unfair in her critique of government policies and officials has been vehemently denied by others who claim that as a civic leader she had simply exercised her rights of free speech (interview with Patel 2007). After all, she wouldn't be the first activist to be punished for making public statements against government policies (interview with Wise 2007). It can be argued that she was simply following the model of other social movement organizations that engage in sustained activism and contentious politics (McAdam, 1977, 1999; Pollentta, 1998; Polletta, 1998). However, separate from the organizational politics, local resentment was simmering over Carter's rising notoriety and her visible absence from the South Bronx community (interview with Donovan 2007). It is difficult to know precisely the cause and effect of these emotions but it can be said that, for a particular period of time, personality and politics did not mix well in Hunts Point.

The South Bronx Greenway was a high profile project that helped empower neighborhood activists and the cause for sustainability and environmental justice. As staff member of SSBx stated,

The greenway was extremely important. It helped us to create and do something where people lived. It gave them more than what they have now in the community. And it respected and legitimized what they are already doing and wanting to do in their neighborhood (interview with Patel 2007).

One foundation representative noted that, while the environmental justice narrative of the South Bronx was common, it was the way in which Majora Carter entwined her personal life story with the revitalization of a notorious community that gained the attention of a wide range of people and organizations.

With the South Bronx, Majora Carter was the right person in the right place at the right time. What's driving her is that she grew up there and became very angry and then was walking her dog and *found* the Bronx River waterfront – her own personal story is so embedded in that larger project. And others are out there doing the same thing but are not as public about it...or charismatic...but they are equally driven (interview with Hoover 2007).

The story of revitalization in the South Bronx juxtaposed the image of a bleak and devastated human, economic and environmental landscape with the promise of health, prosperity and nature. An urban planning consultant remarked, “There are a lot of places that look and feel similar to Hunts Point but they just don't have the same cache. I mean let's face it; Staten Island simply does not have the same cache as the South Bronx. It just doesn't” (interview with Drake 2007).

The public discourse surrounding the ‘greening of the ghetto,’ a campaign slogan used heavily by Sustainable South Bronx, had attracted well-known urban designers, policy-makers and funders to support the idea of a South Bronx Greenway and its

environs (interview with Hoover 2007). Around the same time that the Hunts Point Vision Plan was released, Majora Carter was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship (nicknamed the ‘Genius Award’) for her creative work on urban revitalization strategies from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Through Carter, SSBx has received support from the Clinton Global Initiative, an organization founded by former U.S. President Bill Clinton to strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations to realize change. Carter soon became a nationally recognized figure featured prominently by national media outlets including The New York Times and National Public Radio.

Using her personal experiences growing up in the South Bronx as the backdrop for her environmental message, Carter has received numerous public service awards, recognitions, and honorary degrees. She has moved from an interview subject to convener of topics on urban revitalization and the environment as co-host of The Green; an environmental series featured on the Sundance Channel, and is the National Public Radio host of ‘The Promised Land,’ featuring stories about environmental activism from around the world (Eaton, 2007).

As Carter’s notoriety grew, she spent a great deal of time traveling, often outside the United States, visiting with leaders of local governments and civic organizations. The charismatic leadership that had helped her to establish an important environmental justice organization in the South Bronx has also drawn her away from it and onto an international stage (Holloway, 2008). Back in the Bronx, other civic groups and government agencies had given a great deal of effort to develop the South Bronx Greenway as well as other aspects of the Hunts Point Vision Plan. Resentment over

Carter's notoriety and that of her organization began to take root in certain camps as local planners and decision-makers felt slighted when their contributions were not fully recognized in the press (interview with Gonzalez 2009; Hoover 2007; Fitzsimmons 2008; Riggs 2007; Wright 2008).

The Importance of Building Trust

Nearly all government planners working in and around the South Bronx have acknowledged that as representatives of a government agency, they carry the responsibility of establishing trust in the community (interview with Halpren 2007; Larson 2007; McAfee 2007). This concession toward gaining community trust by government officials was not as evident in the case of the High Line or the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway. Expectedly, city planners shared experiences where civic groups in Hunts Point were initially defensive toward government rules, regulations and overall participation. What was remarkable about this community among city planners was the ability by the local civic community to overcome their initial distrust and begin working toward a common goal.

Agency staff found the involvement with local groups to be mutually rewarding. Discussions during the working group meetings for the Hunts Point Vision Plan were lively but honest. City planners remarked that they felt that the group was working from a common base of wanting desperately to improve overall conditions in the community. As one lead project planner remarked, "It was one of the best projects I've worked on here in terms of relationships. There was all this incredible, positive energy surrounding it" (interview with Wright 2008). As the planning continued, project staff and local advocates would have differences over personalities and politics but were often drawn

back into the project because many shared a deep belief in good governance and planning (interview with McAfee 2007).

Yet, the planners on the Hunts Point Task Force began to lose trust in certain the civic community. Most accounts report that public protests over the City's proposed use of nearby Oak Point as a detention facility and comments made by staff members of Sustainable South Bronx criticizing the Bloomberg administration over this and the redevelopment of Yankee Stadium alienated government staff from the project (interview with Stone 2007; Wright 2008). A lead planner reported that tensions rose and the task force went from being a collegial space where participants felt they were working toward something of great importance to many feeling less enthusiastic. As one planner on the Hunts Point Vision Plan task force remarked:

I don't think there ever was an official falling out; I mean we still work with Sustainable South Bronx. But there were subtle changes in the dynamics and we were less interested in pushing the envelope on some of the projects that were outside of our mandate. It's unfortunate but it's much harder to have your supervisor's support for projects when things happen like that (interview with Wright 2008).

With plenty of other areas in the city requiring attention, EDC planners began to retreat from the full scope of the Greenway Plan by 2007. Instead, EDC staff focused on their mandate on the waterfront and the Hunts Point Market properties that were explicitly under their jurisdiction. Disengagement by EDC meant that the section of the greenway that cut through residential areas would receive less attention. As one city planner remarked, "Hopefully, someone else will now step up to the plate" (Interview with Wright 2008).

Almost by definition, civic advocacy groups take oppositional stances against government, private business interests or even other civic groups. In the case of the

South Bronx Greenway, SSBx had, at times, developed a reputation of a troublemaker within local government. This meant that city planners began to question whether SSBx was capable of balancing the interests of multiple stakeholders. By 2008, some city planners and local stakeholders thought that the Bronx River Alliance might make a better fit for governing the long-term stewardship of the South Bronx Greenway and related open space projects (interview with Campbell 2007; Fitzsimmons 2008; Gonzalez 2009).

The Case of the Cobblestones (or, No Money for the Poor)

In addition to the breakdown of trust in Hunts Point, there was also a concern over how private revenue to maintain the greenway would be generated in a low-income community. In fact, the development of the greenway reached a standstill until the issue of maintenance was temporarily resolved in late 2009. An idea was developed in conjunction with the EDC Task Force and Congressman Serrano's office to hire a consultant to create a business plan for the stewardship of the greenway and related open space amenities (interview with Larson 2007; Wright 2008). Despite having momentum in the early phase of project, the Hunts Point planning process began to reflect the reality of inter-agency bureaucracy and shrinking municipal budgets by 2008. There was a palpable fear of budget shortfalls and how public agencies were going to fully develop and maintain the greenway.

Attempting to combine aesthetics with ecological function, greenway designer Signe Nielson of the design team Matthews-Nielson, LLC used schemes that were not entirely compatible with city design specifications. For example, an improper or extravagant use of cobblestones along the street was raised by more than one city planner

(interview with Halpren 2007; Larson 2007). Seemingly benign and ecologically-friendly, the cobblestones presented a costly and jurisdictional challenge to city agencies in terms of maintenance. One planner suggested that the cobblestones came to symbolize a physical space where public versus private responsibilities were vigorously debated (interview with Larson 2007). Decades of declining park budgets had created a new reliance on private partnerships not only in flagship parks such as Central Park and Prospect Park but also in smaller neighborhood settings. As a result, many city planners felt that government should not be held responsible for such variation in design.

Civic groups were outraged claiming that they were being held to maintenance standards that were unreasonable given that groups from wealthier neighborhoods had access to greater private and public resources and, therefore, higher quality design and construction. Others held the belief that the debate over design and maintenance responsibility was evidence of “elite decision-makers refusing to cede power to the poor” (interview with Donovan 2007). At the same time, city agency representatives were hesitant in committing scarce resources to the project without a clear plan for private support. As one city official stated in frustration,

We like the project and understand what it means in terms of maintenance. We wish we could support it. It's not our fault. It's OMB [Office of Management and Budget] that just doesn't get it. They don't understand that a median strip and all that's being planned for Hunts Point actually adds up to us needing a whole new maintenance crew. Our Commissioner often asks us why open space is treated differently from other parts of the city? After all, he asks, when the city opens a new school don't they supply the teachers? So why then is open space treated any differently? (Interview with Larson 2007).

Some have argued that to compare Hunts Point to similar projects in other neighborhoods, such as the High Line project in West Chelsea, is absurd (interview with

Riggs 2007; Wise 2007). The local Hunts Point community simply does not have a wealthy residential population. However, city planners make the point that businesses in the Hunts Point Market could contribute handsomely to a business improvement district. Based upon sample interviews with business owners by a private consultant to the Greenway Project, it is believed to be “too soon” to pursue the notion of raising revenue directly from the Hunts Pont Market businesses (interview with Gonzalez 2009; Wallace 2007).

Hybrid Governance and Project Outcomes

Staying Afloat

Concerned over the ‘rising tide of expectations,’ Congressman Serrano’s office took the lead in locating funds for the consultant and establishing a scope of work for the development of a business plan for maintaining the South Bronx Greenway. In June 2008, a group of government and civic stakeholders drafted a request for proposals for developing a business plan for maintaining the South Bronx Greenway. In October 2008, the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC) awarded \$150,000 to the urban development firm, Jonathan Rose Companies and Hudson Heights Partners, a non-profit management consultant. The underlying purpose of the contract was to devise a maintenance solution for the greenway that would engage public and private partners in the larger purpose of improving community and environmental development in the South Bronx (interview with Campbell 2007; Larson 2007; Wright 2008. After interviewing key stakeholders, the consultants identified deep rivalries amongst some of the local civic organizations (interview with Gonzalez 2009; Fitzsimmons 2008). Prior to the release of the consultant’s report, a general consensus among public and private stakeholders was

that an entirely new organization was needed to manage the greenway. The real obstacle going forward is to identify the person, group or organizational structure best suited to work across all sectors (interview with Gonzalez 2009).

Not more than a year later, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was passed and economic stimulus funds were awarded to the City of New York for citywide transportation projects. Working with support from the Congressman, the Mayor's Office selected the South Bronx to receive \$22 million of these funds to facilitate the safe movement of trucks, cars, bicycles and pedestrians in the area. This additional funding was applied to the construction of the greenway.

Funding was targeted to construct the South Bronx Greenway as a means to integrate the South Bronx into a regional greenway system (interview with Gonzalez 2009). Despite the feelings of distrust by government representatives toward some civic efforts in the area, the merits of the project had ultimately outlived the contentious issues associated with personality and politics. According to the City of New York, as of 2009, the total project cost for transportation improvements in the area that include the construction of the South Bronx Greenway is \$48.9 million with \$16.7 million contributed through city capital funds, \$6.8 million from state funding, \$3.4 in federal funding and \$22 million in federal stimulus funds (City of New York, 2010b). The estimated date for completed construction of the South Bronx Greenway is fall 2012; however the first phase of construction was delayed until May 2010.

In early 2010, it remained unclear whether a new or existing civic organization will coordinate stewardship activities in and around the South Bronx Greenway. However, much of what is being proposed is in direct response to the existing social

structure of local civic environmental organizations. Preliminary recommendations by the consultants include identifying a charismatic, “well-liked” individual able to lead a “slim, lean organization” (interview with Gonzalez 2009). Selecting one local environmental organization is risky due to unresolved tensions between and within the various organizations and agencies over stewardship turf and local politics. The creation of another civic environmental organization in Hunts Point would be repetitive.

Planning consultants have recommended creating an organizational structure where the director is able to work across civic, state and corporate stakeholders to cultivate shared interests and leverage collaborations. Overall, civic advocacy should thrive and yet controversy should be mitigated within a shared governance structure of greenway. The consultants’ stress the importance of the stewardship organization to remain “neutral” and separated from any present or historical disagreements (interview with Gonzalez 2009).

At the same time, there is a veiled desire on behalf of government groups for the Bronx River Alliance to take over the responsibilities of the South Bronx Greenway. As a steward of the Bronx River and the Bronx River Greenway, the Alliance has become a widely popular group among government representative and local community organizations (interview with Campbell 2007; Larson 2007; Palacios 2007). The result is something entirely different than traditional environmental management with roles and responsibilities of each becoming more fluid and arguably, more responsive. Until issues of organizational turf are resolved in Hunts Point, the stewardship of the South Bronx Greenway may temporarily reside within the offices of the Alliance.

No Clear Civic Leader

In theory, the South Bronx Greenway is supported by several civic, government and business organizations rather than a single stewardship organization (see Figure 5-2). As such, any governing structure must appeal to different civic, state and business interests as all have a publicly articulated stake in the community. In this case, civil society has worked alongside or external to government suggesting that there is change in the endurance and permanence of environmental advocacy organizations not only at the international or national scale as described by Mol (2002) but at the local level as well. There have been some delays in project management as a result. However, the final outcome may be a greenway project whose participants do, indeed, accomplish some of the more utopian goals of creating a shared vision. In this way, the civic groups have retained their freedom to pressure government when private interests supersede that of the public. The extent to which civic entities are willing to participate in the governance of the greenway reflects the powerful social networks that have been drawn into the community by individuals such as Carter who have successfully created a compelling and highly visible environmental justice narrative for the South Bronx (Breslau, 2006).

Both the local and federal government have been active in this case. There has been *strong* government participation through EDC leadership in the task force, securing project funds and being persistent in addressing the need to secure long-term and effective stewardship. Powerful social and political networks of Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff, and Congressman Jose Serrano have also shaped government participation. All have mediated business interests in the project and targeted significant financial support to the area. Similar to civil society, government representatives are participating in a new alliance where the rules governing organizational behavior are unclear. In the absence of such rules, personal behavior and beliefs tend to be accentuated as it did in the case of planners at the Economic Development Corporation and the local community.

In the South Bronx, government is perhaps best characterized as positioning itself as a strong state actor within a new governing arena. Despite taking the lead on the Hunts Point Vision Plan and providing significant financial support, government alone was unable to drive the planning and development process of the South Bronx Greenway. Instead, government became a strong actor amidst a persistent group of civic leaders and organizations with access to social networks, power, and publicity.

In the case of the South Bronx Greenway, civil society and government may differ in their interpretation of risks, motivations and tactics but both sectors are concerned with improving the health and wealth of the Hunts Point community. Federal involvement was triggered by the pursuit of environmental justice within the context of societal well-being and economic growth. Local government was motivated by the

prospect of economic development and used the notion of environmental restoration and the greenway as an organizing principle.

In contrast to the development of the High Line and the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, the community's low-income status and the immediate lack of financial resources for long-term maintenance slowed the project's momentum. However, financing did not prevent the project from ultimately moving forward. Rather, it was the breakdown of trust between civil actors and government that had the real potential to damage the project. Compared to the other cases, contentious politics were much higher in Hunts Point given the distrust between parties that lingered from past interactions and rivalries.

While project stewardship continues to evolve and new leadership takes hold in the community, it appears that civic and state organizations involved in the South Bronx Greenway were on a trajectory toward a weak form of *hybrid governance* as the precise stewardship role of each party remains unclear. There is no formal decision-making structure with local government and the current model seeks to dilute the definition of a critical civil society.

As each of the cases have shown, as government and civic groups move from more traditional models of government to governance, established rules of decision-making and power become destabilized. In the other cases, this period of destabilization has been filled with either a formal agreement or an informal collaboration based upon trust. In this instance, the case of the South Bronx Greenway reinforces the need to regain such a trust and ownership in a shared vision able to transcend personality and politics. However, this is an imperfect rule as Sustainable South Bronx and EDC

planners have again begun to work well together. This is most likely due to the personalities involved rather than any formal arrangement. One of the lead EDC project managers was a former employee of Sustainable South Bronx with a deep understanding of the community. As a former staff person in the Office of the Bronx Borough President, the new director of SSBx has direct experience working with local government. In this sense, an important aspect of resolving persistent environmental problems may include the dynamic nature of civil society, social norms and personalities.

CHAPTER SIX

Stewardship Groups and Urban Governance

In New York City, civic-led, urban environmental stewardship groups are engaged in a variety of stakeholder agreements, alliances, and collaborations with the state. Stewardship groups in this study are represented by high-income elites as in the case of the High Line, middle-class homeowners as evidenced by the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, and environmental justice activists in low-income communities in the South Bronx. As evidenced by the three case studies, governing arrangements tend to have a particular sphere of influence that is a physical space, a stewardship turf, as well as abstract space, within the realm of the market economy and governmental decision-making. The degree to which groups govern as hybrid entities is related to the type of stewardship group as well as the level of contention between urban actors (see Table 6:1). The formation of hybrid governance, in this sense, moves on a pendulum rather than from fixed, hierarchical positions.

In the realm of civic environmental stewardship: who leads the campaign, who directs the project and who receives kudos for its construction often dictates who governs alongside government. This is a kind of ‘stewardship turf’ that can result in competition between organizations creating tensions or synergies. Further, misrepresentations of civic groups or government agencies can have a real impact on an organization’s capacity to raise funds and manage political access. Private funders report that the civic community, in particular, is often judged by the compelling nature of their story as well as who is part of their social network. In other words, the power of a civic organization

also resides in who funds it, talks about it and participants in the organizational structure (interview with Whittner 2007).

Findings build upon the theory of ecological modernization as the study offers an example of civic environmental groups that have gone beyond participation in public meetings to sharing the reigns of governance. In this study one finds that local stewardship groups have become highly engaged in socio-political networks that lead to urban governance. Similar to environmental organizations studied at the international and national level (Mol 2000), urban stewardship groups are no longer a catchall for broad environmental issues but rather specific in their goals and objectives. In this study, urban open space projects are catalysts inspiring civic and government groups to work within a broader environmental, social and economic agenda.

In terms of urban planning, neighborhood stewardship groups, like cities, are not viewed in isolation but are a part of greater social and economic flows. At the same time, neighborhood groups define themselves uniquely in relation to the physical environment and nature of local politics. Within the neighborhood structure, individuals align themselves with environmental stewardship groups and coalitions that share similar values and social motivations. Rather than acting as impartial bureaucrats, urban planners in this study tend to act as individuals basing their relationships with civic groups on the level of contention, degree of trust and shared visions.

Table 6:1 Hybrid Governance Matrix

<u>PROJECT</u>	IV: Type of Stewardship Group	IV: Level of Contention with the State	DV: Outcomes / Project Status	DV: Degree of Hybrid Governance
Brooklyn Greenway	<u>Professionalized Grassroots</u> (Civic-led; Mixed Income; Homeowners or Long-time Residents)	Medium	Some sections begun; DOT master plan due 2010; no final date for completion	Moderate
The High Line	<u>Urban Park Elite</u> (Civic-led; High Income; Powerful Social Networks)	Low	Fully Realized Plan; Phase 1 of Park is Complete in 2009; Phase 2 started in 2010; City Acquiring Additional Rail Line Space	Strong
South Bronx Greenway	<u>Environmental Activists</u> (Civic-led; Low Income, Environmental Justice Narrative)	High	Enhanced Plan with a Randall's Island Connection; First Phase Yet to be Completed; Proposed for May 2010	Weak

Case Summaries

The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway

Type of Stewardship: Professionalized Grassroots

With the intent to reclaim Brooklyn's post-industrial waterfront for local residents, the founding members of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative began their work in the late 1990s as grass-roots, street corner activists. One of the principal mechanisms used to establish their claim was to engage in public acts of stewardship. The group used discursive tactics as they introduced the notion of a publically accessible waterfront to local residents, business owners and city representatives. Not unlike Jurgen Habermas'

depiction of 18th Century bourgeoisie debating politics of the state in Parisian salons (Habermas, 1989) greenway supporters raised the issue of the waterfront revitalization in coffee houses, bars and restaurants.

The timing of the groups' actions coincided with powerful market forces that led to a change in land use along the Brooklyn waterfront, creating opportunities for large-scale, residential and mixed-use redevelopment. Neighborhood rezoning paved the way for a dramatic rise in new residential construction along with new parks and open spaces. For the first time in half a century, parts of the Brooklyn waterfront would become accessible to the public and used for recreational use. With the election of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the group found allegiance in their cause among government planners.

Levels of Contention: Medium

While redevelopment created tension and uncertainty, representatives of the greenway project faced moderate levels of opposition as the entire Brooklyn waterfront was quoted earlier as "up for grabs" and a number of contentious public meetings ensued (interview with Costello 2007). In this case, civic and government actors were jointly motivated by risk. Greenway advocates feared if they failed to act, the issue of community access would be left out of state and private redevelopment plans. At the same time, government planners were cognizant that civic opposition impedes development. As such, planners were proactively seeking out the community to ensure support for their efforts. The notion was that early engagement would minimize delays in planning and construction. And in the case of the Department of Transportation, planners were inspired to create innovative designs and collaboration.

Fully aware of their need for each other, civil society and government planners soon established a ‘give and take’ style of negotiation in developing a waterfront greenway. As the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative settled on a broad, strategic vision that encompassed several neighborhoods, the greenway group rose to the forefront of community-based planning along the waterfront. In addition to promoting the greenway project, BGI grew adept in mediating contentious issues between public and private entities on behalf of the local citizenry. The greenway group became politically savvy and flexible in its dealings with local government.

The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative worked directly with government planners to overcome a ‘trained bureaucracy’ of experts and technocrats who often lacked incentives to work in partnership across agencies. This type of collaboration is common in natural resource management as there is much evidence to suggest that the most successful environmental programs to ‘save the bay’ or ‘restore grasslands’ comes from developing new modes of operation that include shared rule-making and responsibility (T. M. Koontz et al., 2004). In the case of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, civil society was less oppositional and developed a form of collaborative ‘counter-expertise’ in relation to government.

While BGI continued to represent local public interests, it also became expert in understanding the structure of government agencies and the nuance of individual personalities. Intent on overcoming bureaucratic barriers, BGI would then use tactical language and messaging that inspired collaboration, public service and joint accountability in dealing with government decision-makers. This collaborative approach

was evident in their public presentations of greenway partnerships and regular communications with agency staff, funders and members of the public.

Hosting fundraisers and parties throughout the waterfront area, BGI provided a platform for government officials and business elites to restate their commitment to community and to be publicly congratulated for their efforts. In turn, government planners rewarded BGI by recognizing the group as the lead civic organization working on behalf of the greenway. Such recognition helped BGI to establish a positive reputation among private and public funders. As such, the greenway group was invited to become a member of the state-led task force and other quasi-public meetings on the subject of Brooklyn waterfront's redevelopment.

Project Outcomes & Hybrid Governance: Moderate

Only a few years after its establishment, the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative has permanently established a 14-mile greenway and thwarted potential opposition from local civic groups and local businesses. However, it is clear from discussions with BGI as well as other city agencies that the organization remains a critical community partner in the ongoing promotion of the greenway.

As of 2010, the Department of Transportation has taken the lead on developing the master plan that must be approved by the City Council and entered into the City's capital budget (follow-up interview with Dey 2010). Because much of the greenway is located within the public-right-of-way, it will be the official responsibility of local government to maintain the site. The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative continues to support and celebrate the greenway while working in direct collaboration with city agencies on its implementation over the next several years.

The High Line

Type of Stewardship: Urban Park Elite

The legacy of urban parks is often thought to reside in the strength of design and materials rather than the social organization that surrounds a particular project. The story of the High Line reminds us that people, politics, design and real estate continue to play a critical role in new park development in New York City. Although entirely different in design and material structure, the story of the High Line is reminiscent to the development of New York's Central Park.

The design of the High Line was based upon an aesthetic vision favored by an elite class of urban designers and developers and modeled after the Promenade Plantee in Paris (public lecture by Hammond 2007). Set apart by over one hundred years of urban history, supporters of both projects used a similar rhetoric that combined the artistic and social virtues of a public park to its visitors. Friends of the High Line (FHL) founders Joshua David and Robert Hammond, as stewards presiding over a highly popularized urban project, are reminiscent of Olmsted and Vaux as they navigate the realm of well-placed politicians, decision-makers, popular artists, private donors and investors. The construction of the High Line and Central Park drew a strong base of support from Scobey's (2003) "civic-minded capitalists" eager to benefit from a rise in local real estate values and to part of a creative public enterprise. Much like D. Taylor's (2009) Minturn Circle, Friends of the High Line drew upon elite social networks to advance their ideas and interests over the use of urban space and social order. Comprised of artists, capitalists, and politicians, New York City's glitterati flocked to lend their support to The High Line.

The magnitude of this effort reflected the need for a professionalized group to serve as its long-term steward. The project itself, as well as the high-level and fast-paced redevelopment along the West Side, propelled this group forth into one of New York City's leading park conservancies. The transformation of two neighborhoods into leading a multi-million dollar urban park stewardship group within the span of a few years is remarkable. It is a testament to the notion that real estate cycles and the stage of neighborhood development may in fact produce particular forms of stewardship organization.

Levels of Contention: Low

In the case of the High Line, civil society was shaped and motivated by securing an aesthetic vision of 'celebrating the ruins of the city' thought to be transformative to contemporary social and economic life of the larger community. However, civic actors did not entrust the state to carry forth this vision with precision. Using highly innovative strategies and developing significant counter-expertise, civil society directed the public discourse surrounding the debate to the Save the High Line.

Although the fight to Save the High was highly spirited and contentious, the period of critical contention was relatively short-lived. Friends of the High Line aggressively sought to re-direct and engage rather than compete with market forces. For over a decade property owners and developers advocated to demolish the line and in only a few years, Friends of the High Line turned this opposition into full support for the High Line. New York's business elite including local real estate owners and financial investors operated with fluidity, shifting their position seemingly overnight.

In terms of an official governmental position on the project, various city, state and federal agency staff had been nominally involved in the High Line project, however they became fully engaged supporters once officials were assured of its potential to attract private investment and increase public funds. Government action, in the case of the Mayor's Office and the Parks Department, was predicated on the opportunity to create a public amenity that would increase the city tax base and provide, in part, for the park's maintenance budget.

The real point of contention over the High Line may arise from struggles over neighborhood identity and the ability of the larger civic community to participate in future park agenda setting. Although it is unlike the construction of Central Park where an entire village and its occupants were removed, the High Line remains an unmistakably gentrifying force along the west side of Manhattan.

It is important to note that although few resources were spared in revitalizing Central Park in the 1980s, community residents struggled with issues of unemployment, health and quality of life concerns in the adjacent neighborhoods of East and Central Harlem (Rosenzweig, 1992; Shiffman, 1969). A potential concern in terms of contentious politics is that the project has become a significant story of popular interest and as such, it tends to overshadow other neighborhood needs for public space, quality of life improvements and rezoning in the surrounding community. For example, some residents have argued that although it is a public park, the High Line is better suited for tourists, real estate investors, students of landscape design and urban enthusiasts rather than children or the elderly, for example (interview with Comstock 2009).

Outcomes and Hybrid Governance: Strong

The High Line is a rather traditional case of urban park planning by urban elites who have joined in a self-supporting endeavor that doubles as a public good. In contrast to other forms of collaborative governance, the roles of the government and civil society are not blurred, but instead clearly defined to maximize shared interests. However, roles and responsibilities have shifted as civil society has accepted significant fiscal responsibility for the park raising nearly seventy percent of the annual operating budget. In this case, local government has not necessarily relinquished its authority. Instead, government has transferred its expertise to the private sector in exchange for secured funding and support from the private sector. In sum, each party has become dependent upon each other and the High Line provides a strong case of hybrid governance among a fairly traditional group of government officials, civic boosters and urban elites.

The South Bronx Greenway

Type of Stewardship: Environmental Justice

The South Bronx Greenway was proposed during a time when the local community was seeking new ideas for urban redevelopment. These ideas were buoyed by a robust real estate market and growing public discourse in support of “green” communities. Like the case of the High Line and the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, residents and community-based organizations strategically positioned themselves within the context of a post-industrial neighborhood poised for redevelopment. Juxtaposing the gritty, noxious and industrial landscape of the South Bronx with the restorative qualities of nature, civic groups advocated for a cleaner, greener and more economically viable community.

Under the banner of environmental justice, a local charismatic civic leader named Majora Carter was able to attract national and international attention to the Bronx River, the South Bronx Greenway and the larger community concerns of the South Bronx. Decades earlier, Jose Serrano, another local charismatic leader became a member of the United States Congress. Ever since, Congressman Serrano and his staff have unabashedly claimed the environmental and economic revitalization of this South Bronx district to be an issue of high national interest.

The Bronx River became an iconic symbol of this revitalization and the South Bronx Greenway soon established itself as its tributary weaving its way into the heart of the community. Both the river and the greenway are used to symbolize, as one respondent put it, the “promise of things to come” in the South Bronx. Although the greenway may serve as a mechanism for social control, it was not necessarily championed by traditional elites seeking to pacify the poor. In this case, one finds the redress of industrial and market behavior rather than the moral reform of the working class as the impetus for new parks and greenways. As such, the South Bronx Greenway is tied to a much larger planning process that encompasses transportation, housing, public health, economic development, and parks and the environment.

The continued risk associated with a toxic and noxious environment is thought to be a matter of extreme concern for many civic groups. The plan for South Bronx Greenway was cast within the context of a moral story of profound urban poverty that eclipsed the claim making made by either the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative or The High Line.

Levels of Contention: High

At certain points during the course of the development of the South Bronx Greenway, tensions ran high between individual personalities and organizations. As evidence of Max Weber's dichotomy of bureaucratic structure, local government staff participated in the South Bronx project as institutional representatives as well as individual actors (M. Weber, 1946). In the words of government planners on this project one finds evidence of the 'street level bureaucrat' acting and reacting to intrapersonal relationships rather than serving as an impartial technocrat (B. Jones, 1998).

In all three case studies, subjects engaged in contentious politics where a particular group established a claim that infringed upon the claim of other urban actors (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). In the case of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, the group used mediating tactics to resolve disputes and, in certain instances, it conceded to the rule of government in order to gain greater advantages later in the process of constructing the greenway. Contentious politics were often removed from the public sphere and debated within the confines of task force meetings. As a result, new forms of governance took shape as the state relied on a quasi-private task force structure rather than public hearings or community board meetings. Those invited to participate in the task force were highly professionalized stewardship groups and/or individuals who, for the most part, subscribed to a conciliatory rather than oppositional politics.

In the case of the High Line, the level of contention was less than that of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway despite the fact that oppositional forces developed a high-level and well-financed campaign to tear down the old rail line. As discussed, opposition to the High Line was relatively short-lived once Friends of the High began its

campaign. A redemptive narrative that drew upon the restorative qualities of nature combined with strong economic incentives was used to mediate disputes and develop a coalition of urban elites in favor of supporting the High Line. In this case, government actions were bound by formal rules, regulations, authorities and budgets, while civic stewardship was able to play a more dynamic role responding to changes in the political, social and economic landscape of the surrounding community. Again, the task force structure was used, yet in this case, it was restricted to only one civic group: Friends of the High Line.

In the South Bronx one finds much higher levels of contention as local groups battle for stewardship turf and members refuse to relinquish their role as outspoken civic activists. Ironically, the greenway planning process was an open, iterative process that included any number of local stakeholders. Yet, the ultimate outcome was given to a private planning consultant whose preliminary recommendations were to create an entity that was neither civic nor government. Public opinion and dissent in the South Bronx may not be easily extinguished, as the goal was not necessarily to construct a greenway but to transform radically the lives of local people and the environment.

Outcomes and Hybrid Governance: Weak

The construction of the first section of the South Bronx Greenway, along Lafayette Avenue, was delayed for several months. It was then expected to begin in May 2010 and has since been scheduled for construction later in the year (follow-up interviews with EDC planners). Despite good intentions, project delays and high levels of contention among civic groups, local government and federal representatives, the South Bronx Greenway remains an example of hybrid governance albeit a weak version

of it. At this time, it is unclear which government agency, civic group or coalition is responsible for the over project. While there is evidence of strong personal commitment to the project in the South Bronx it is unclear whether this is enough to form a stronger basis for hybrid governance. In fact, the current management plan is to create a new entity or locate an organization whose leader has been predetermined to be a designated neutral of a stewardship organization absent of any particular political turf.

The project differs significantly from the other two cases in that several South Bronx groups participated in government-led task forces as opposed to a single organization taking the lead as in the case of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and the High Line. In addition, the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative and Friends of the High Line were founded with the sole purpose to promote their respective projects and established their organizations separate from other civic-minded individuals and competing groups. However, in the case of the South Bronx Greenway, one finds that either an entirely new organization will be created to reflect shared interests or an existing, well-respected organization will become the project steward. This case is interesting as it suggests that hybrid governance is fluid and over time, it can take multiple forms.

Ecological Modernization: A New Role for Civil Society

While earlier versions of ecological modernization privilege state and market actors as a leading force for change, this study documents an emerging shift in the literature that calls for the consideration of civil society actors as they are critical to new governing structures within the field of environmental politics (Dana R Fisher, Fritsch, & Anderen, 2010). In the case of urban environmental planning, groups and alliances are emerging in response to a wide variety of issues. Stewardship groups are seeking

permanent status as decision-makers and are using place-based strategies to establish new governing structures.

In the case of New York City's post-industrial waterfront and its adjacent communities, one finds the state and civil society creating organizational structures to harness market forces while addressing the needs of urban residents. In the context of urban environmental stewardship, civil society assumes a more complex role of steward, facilitator and advocate. As a steward, it conserves, manages, monitors, advocates and educates the public about the local environment. As a facilitator, it assesses and generates ideas among various social entities. As an advocate, its overall actions are purposeful and in defense of a cause. It is civil society, rather than government, that assumes the mantle of a moral claim calling for the type of environmental planning projects that serve the economic, social and environmental needs of society.

Weaving Nature into Local Planning Dialogues

Environmental narratives (Hajer, 1996; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003) proved to be an important mediating mechanism used by city planners and civic stewards, particularly within the task force structures established in each of the three case studies. Democracy and the environment share a paradoxical nature. Both can be restorative and destructive, resilient and inflexible, patterned and disordered. In all three cases, there was a particular environmental vision that became an important component of shaping urban planning decisions within each project planning processes. The resilient and restorative qualities of nature were drawn out by discursive processes to create accessible and democratic space in Brooklyn, to give rise to artistic design and a new urban park constituency

among the ruins of the High Line, and to improve the health and social welfare of people in the South Bronx.

Charismatic and dedicated civic leadership combined with a popular storyline and strong urban design resulted in the strategic accumulation of economic, social and political resources. Ideals associated with urban nature shaped public discourse, politics and ultimately, the hybrid arrangements governing each project. The community organizing efforts of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative to *'open up the waterfront'* has resulted in an urban design that has inspired the integration of public and private redevelopment efforts. The expressive leadership Majora Carter and Congressman Jose Serrano in *'greening the ghetto'* has brought about innovative ways to improve the lives of people through the restoration of the environment. And finally, in *'building upon ruins,'* two neighbors from the west side of Manhattan have channeled the spirit of Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to create a public work of art that has transformed an entire community.

Civic groups used urban nature to create a common ground from which to form coalitions and collaborations. In all cases, civic groups used a particular urban design to express an elaborate storyline extolling the virtues of urban greening. Ultimately, this tactic had the effect of disentangling a more rational and scientific approach to environmental planning that unlikely would have produced any one of these new public space projects.

For example, an older, rational planning approach would use a percentage based upon the population to determine the amount of open space required in each neighborhood area. Because the Hunts Point residential population in the South Bronx is

relatively small, rational planning might suggest that its open space requirements have already been met. In the case of the High Line, rational planning models would not have justified the amount of public money spent per square foot for the project. And in the case of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, rational planning models are not likely to have produced a linear design spanning over 14 miles through public and private developments.

At the same time, by engaging in a dialogue with city planners and officials, the majority of civic groups studied here strategically positioned their organizations as working in collaboration with government entities. In all three cases, civic groups gained more meaningful entry into government planning processes when they were able to engage in an open dialogue with government. In the one situation when a civic group directly opposed governmental policies, as in the case of Sustainable South Bronx, project planning was slowed temporarily when trust between institutions and individuals wavered. This seems to suggest that while ‘nature narratives’ may be a discursive mechanism useful in the early stages of coalition building and group formation, they are not enough to sustain long-term environmental governance. This suggests that trust, in addition to economic viability, is critical to successful environmental governance.

This need for mutual trust between civil society and government in this study emerged from what van Tatenhove and Leroy (2000) has described as ‘interference zones,’ places where the state negotiates with non-state entities through networks, associations and collaborations. New York City civic stewardship groups used the creation of open space campaigns and new organizational structures as a tool to shape the local environment alongside local city planners. In this sense, interference zones can be

thought of as the planning task force groups that were used by local stewardship groups and government planners to mediate and contain contentious issues in each of the three cases.

In all three cases, local government representatives were eager to collaborate with local groups, not only to make more efficient the process of redevelopment, but because they shared the same 'nature narrative' of restoring the city. Many of the innovative government actions in each case appear to be the result of city project managers who are fully engaged in the intrapersonal relationships embedded in local planning situations. At the same time, one finds that local government action remains entrenched in models of economic efficiency. In this sense one locates 'two worlds of municipalities,' where a part of the state is focused on market expenditure and capital accumulation while the other is concerned with providing services (B. Jones, 1998). The urban business elite become part of these interactions. Although they do not initiate urban park planning, per se, as civic boosters they remain integral to the process as they did in the 19th Century. The market, specifically the real estate market in New York City, provides the underlying context for decision-making and urban planning decisions, while business elites participate within environmental stewardship settings as civic-minded actors.

This duality of municipal decision-making creates an opening for civil society within the frame of ecological modernization theory. Civil society has the potential to become a mediating rather than a contentious force among state agencies and actors. As the state becomes more accustomed to dealing with civil society in this way, civic engagement becomes a type of risk management. As a result, the state has become an active proponent of a shared responsibility making way for this notion of hybrid

governance. This is consistent with our understanding of ecological modernization where state actors acknowledge the limitations of their institutions in solving persistent environmental problems and allowing for and encouraging market-based, technological solutions and hybrid governance (Jänicke & Jörgens, 2009).

Still, the question of who leads this process of developing open space is important as it provides a window into the process and mechanism governing contemporary urban planning. The question of who leads is pertinent to understanding whether or not civil society is being co-opted or hollowed out by engaging in state-led task forces and planning processes that require full consensus. For the most part, this study has found that urban park planning is a negotiated outcome of the interaction between the state and civil society. However, a question remains over accessibility and the subtle effects of the task force coalition models that tend to dissuade full civic participation.

The establishment of regional parks, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, playgrounds, community gardens, urban farms, greenways, and restoration areas are therefore the result of particular moments in the social history of the city. These include changes in neighborhood demography and urban design as well as type of civic activism, levels of contention, political regimes, and municipal budget and real estate cycles. Taken as a whole, urban parks and open space planning reflect this dynamic history. In turn, the processes and mechanisms of urban environmental planning tend to shape the form and function of civil society and the state as they create new modes of governance.

Recommendations for Urban Planning

For generations, parks have been used as places of social protest and collective identity, of leisure and recreation, of art and aesthetics, and for improving economic

development. Although the idea of the public commons dates back to ancient cities, the modern urban park movement began with the development of private gardens and squares. The construction of New York's Central Park ushered in a new era of publicly managed accessible open space. For much of the 20th Century, city parks departments around the country remained at the helm of urban open space stewardship. This system of governance has historically been influenced by urban elites or those able to harness powerful political and economic forces.

Over one hundred years after the establishment Central Park's Board of Commissioners, there is evidence of a similar class of capitalists, politicians, and artistic elite who are active in urban park planning. In addition, new groups and alliances have risen to the fore of urban environmental stewardship. This study sheds light on professionalized urban environmental stewardship groups emerging from different neighborhood social ecologies. Some of these groups have ascended to power through rather traditional elite networks and others gained a foothold into urban planning processes through popular discourse and charismatic leadership. In order to achieve parity in the planning process, urban planners must understand *stewardship as a system* and work to strengthen the capacity of different types of stewardship groups.

The issue of park planning and open space will remain contentious, at times, as Foglesong's (1995) 19th Century 'democratic-capitalist contradiction' persists as part of the struggle over economic efficiency and the social benefits of urban space. It is within this contradiction over the use of urban space where one finds the 19th Century 'Park Board' reflected in the thousands of stewardship organizations, committees and

associations whose claims have given them some measure of authority over public parks and urban open space (Dana R Fisher et al., in process; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008).

Although the state continues as the primary party responsible for public policy and the management of public space, civil society has taken a lead role in mediating market forces and influencing local government through networks of public and private support. Urban planners of all types should be conscious of a new framework of networked decision-making and authority as it can determine the location of public facilities and resources. In addition, urban planners must remain cautious of how participatory planning processes and renewed civic engagement might shift into closed or restrictive task force decision-making.

As local stewardship organizations interact with larger, citywide systems of management, the result is a blend of bottom-up and top-down governing strategies. By examining subtle shifts in meaning of bureaucratic project management, one finds that state and civic actors produce different forms of environmental governance dependent upon neighborhood social ecologies. The development of neighborhood parks and open space depends upon the human ecosystem framework or, how the social and biophysical history of a community, expressed in narratives depicting different social ecological perspectives are entwined with market forces, political cycles and demographic patterns of the contemporary City. Governance swings on a pendulum where the potential for participatory planning and access to power shift back and forth from government to civil society. Urban planners seeking hybrid arrangements in the middle of the pendulum's swing must understand that despite the existence of formal agreements such conditions are not necessarily fixed. To ensure a continued balance between equity and efficiency,

there remains a critical role for the urban planner to ensure trust and cooperation within the structure of hybrid arrangements over time.

This study has established that urban environmental groups have grown less content to participate in urban environmental planning through traditional means of public participation preferring the ‘hands-on’ role of a civic steward. While stewardship is still defined by neighborhood clean-ups and plantings, in certain instances it has grown to include formal rule making, technical expertise and fiscal management over public space. For the most part, the socio-political rise in authority and expertise of any civic group depends upon how a particular issue is framed, resource capacities, site history and personal degrees of trust. The state retains a significant role in rule-making authority but yields some of its power in exchange for capital and labor. As Ansell and Gash (2008) suggest, collaborative governance differs from traditional public-private partnership in that the former expands beyond the provision of public services to include official rule making and agenda setting over public space. At the same time, hybrid governance puts a sharper point on the notion of collaborative governance as it acknowledges that civil society and the state were once discrete entities that are forever changed through their association. Between many civic and state organizations there is a ‘blurred line’ between what is public and what is private. In the case of hybrid governance, the lines are so blurred that what one sees is an entirely new form of governance.

In addition to physical space and design, urban planners must become attune to these new and dynamic forms of governance. Specifically, noting what other types of participatory planning processes and public review such as neighborhood meetings, public hearings and review sessions are diminished by the predominance of special task

forces and hybrid arrangements. At the same time, given the influence of certain civic stewardship organizations in local environmental planning, how might local civic leadership remain inclusive? How might local leaders and city planners allow for dissent and create new mechanisms by which to establish trust and collaboration?

The urban landscape, more specifically parks and open spaces, is an expression of societal norms and values mediated by governing forces of the City. This study claims that the institutional arrangements that govern these physical spaces mimic larger democratic processes where public and private interests are debated, negotiated and changed. As such, this study had focused on the interstitial space between what is public and what is private, finding that the proverbial commons is expressed in a highly localized and particular fashion as civic stewardship actions and city planners transcend bureaucratic management to encompass shared visions for the City.

List of Interview Respondents

Please note that actual organizations are listed. Pseudonyms are used for individuals representing these organizations.

RESPONDENT Last name, first	ORGANIZATION	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Alexander, Tina	Design Trust for Public Space	8/20/2007
Campbell, Doug	Office of U.S. Congressman Jose Serrano	11/28/2007
Comstock, Regina	Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association	10/2009
Costello, Joseph	Regional Plan Association	7/13/2007
Dey, Marion	Brooklyn Greenway Initiative	8/3/2007
Diehl, Susan	Hudson River Park Trust	10/8/2007
Donovan, Stephanie	Pratt Center for Sustainability & Environmental Justice	7/19/2007
Drake, Donna	HRA Associates	11/1/2007
Fitzsimmons, Christy	Jonathan Rose Companies	11/20/2008
Fleishman, Joel	Transportation Alternatives	12/7/2007
Gonzalez, George	Jonathan Rose Companies	10/23/2009
Goodyear, Andrew	Brooklyn Greenway Initiative	8/3/2007
Hammond, Robert *	Friends of the High Line	11/8/2007
Halpren, Cecilia	NYC Dept of Transportation	10/4/2007
Hernandez, Carla	UpRose	11/19/2007
Hoffman, Renee	National Parks Service	12/7/2007
Hoover, Beth	JM Kaplan Fund	10/15/2007
Lang, Annie	Friends of the High Line	10/4/2007
Larson, Joanne	NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation	8/1/2007
Mack, Steve	Brooklyn Greenway Initiative	8/9/2007
Mays, Janet	NYS Dept of State	10/29/2007
McAfee, Edward	NYC Economic Development Corporation	7/25/2007
Mince, Martin	NYC Real Estate Development Company**	6/22/2006
Nu, Daniel	Corcoran Group	6/28/2007
Palacios, Lawrence	Office of U.S. Congressman Jose Serrano	8/20/2007
Patel, Patricia	Sustainable South Bronx	6/25/2007
Plummer, Nancy	Friends of the High Line	10/30/2007
Pullman, Gerard	NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation	1/20/2009
Rice, Gertrude	NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation	1/20/2009
Riggs, Matthew	Sustainable South Bronx	6/28/2007
Rollins, Peter	Down East Seafood	10/30/2007
Sampson, Erica	Independence Community Foundation	7/18/2007
Sheriden, Michael	Rockaway Beach Branch Greenway Committee	11/13/2007
Singh, Jennifer	NYC Economic Development Corporation	7/28/2007
Steele, James	Partnerships for Parks	8/14/2007
Stone, Benjamin	NYC Dept of Parks & Recreation	8/1/2007
Wade, Sarah	Office of the Brooklyn Borough President	7/31/2007
Wallace, Debra	Bronx River Alliance	10/29/2007

Weaver, Diane	Design Trust for Public Space	11/10/2007
Whittner, Pearl	Independence Community Foundation	11/6/2007
White, Roger	The Trust for Public Land	7/27/2007
Wilson, Kurt	Solar One	10/1/2007
Wise, Margaret	Sustainable South Bronx	11/28/2007
Wright, Leslie Ann	NYC Economic Development Corporation	10/28/2008

*Information from Robert Hammond, which is his real name, was obtained during a public lecture that he gave at Google, Inc. NYC Headquarters on 11/8/2007.

**This is a pseudonym for the respondent's organization.

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