



What's going on in Gowanus?

There are lots of different government and community plans, initiatives, and legal processes impacting the neighborhood right now. Other plans, initiatives, and decisions from the past have already shaped the Gowanus we know today.

This chart shows the major efforts since 2003. They are organized into three groups: environmental initiatives (in green), planning initiatives (in purple), and public housing related initiatives (in brown).

What's going on in Gowanus?

Lots of plans, initiatives, and legal processes have shaped – and continue to shape – Gowanus. These are some of the major ones taking place since 2003 – and how you can get involved.

ENVIRONMENT

ONGOING

Manufactured Gas Plant Clean-Ups (2003–Ongoing)

What is it? Three former manufactured gas plants, which are a source of coal tar contamination, surround the canal. These are scheduled to be cleaned up to reduce health and environmental risks and prepare land for redevelopment.

Who's in charge? NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, with input from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

How are community members involved? Community involvement is guided by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's public comment and engagement process.

Gowanus Green (2007–Ongoing)

What is it? A plan to redevelop the Public Place site on the northwest side of the canal. The development will have over 770 units of housing—70% of which will be affordable—and a public park. The project has been delayed because of the Superfund clean-up process.

Who's in charge? NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). The development team includes Fifth Avenue Committee, Hudson Companies, Jonathan Rose Companies, and the Bluestone Organization.

How are community members involved? Fifth Avenue Committee organized extensive community outreach and engagement from 2007 to 2010. Outreach will continue when the time for redevelopment gets closer. The development proposal will go through the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which will include public meetings and Community Board review.

Gowanus Superfund Site Plan and Clean-Up (2008–Ongoing)

What is it? A plan for cleaning up contamination in the Gowanus Canal, plus other improvements to keep water clean in the future. Some of the work has started, and cleanup is scheduled for completion around 2022.

Who's in charge? US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

How are community members involved?

The Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group (CAG) represents the community's voice in the plan. Membership is open to individuals and organizations serving neighborhoods along the Canal, and CAG meetings are open to the public.

Gowanus Canal Long Term Control Green Infrastructure Plans (2010–Ongoing)

What is it? A plan for creating infrastructure and making improvements to control stormwater and combined sewer overflows that discharge into the canal.

Who's in charge? NYC Department of Environmental Protection. The US EPA ordered the city to build two combined sewer overflow (CSO) tanks to capture some of the 300 million+ gallons of raw sewage that is discharged into the Gowanus Canal each year.

How are community members involved?

Community engagement is guided by the NYC DEP's public engagement and participation process. Gowanus Canal Conservancy, Fifth Avenue Committee, FUREE, Friends of Thomas Green Park and Mobilization for Justice are also involved in public engagement. In 2018, NYC DEP's ULURP action to buy private land at the northern end of the Canal for the 8 million gallon CSO was approved.

COMPLETED

Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study (2012–2014)

What is it? The New York State Department of State's BOA Program provides funding and technical assistance to cities and community-based organizations to improve urban sites that have been contaminated (called "brownfields"). Before an organization gets assistance, it must complete a nomination process, which includes a detailed study.

Who was in charge? Friends of Community Board 6 sponsored a study of two sites in Gowanus. Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation sponsored the review of sites in Red Hook.

PLANNING

ONGOING

Gowanus Neighborhood Rezoning (2016–Ongoing)

What is it? A rezoning changes the rules about what can be built where, including what buildings can be used for and how big they can be. The Gowanus rezoning is one of several happening across the city as a part of Mayor de Blasio's plan to build more affordable housing.

Who's in charge? NYC Department of City Planning (DCP)

How are community members involved? DCP has been hosting public meetings; Fifth Avenue Committee launched the Gowanus Neighborhood Coalition for Justice. The rezoning will go through the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which will include public meetings and Community Board review. Council Members Lander and Levin will advise on the plan and vote on the proposal.

COMPLETED

North Park Slope Rezoning (2003) & South Park Slope Rezoning (2007)

What is it? In 2003 and 2007, the city changed the zoning along parts of 4th Avenue to allow for bigger residential buildings. Since then, rents in the area have increased dramatically, and many low- and moderate-income renters have been displaced.

Who was in charge? NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) under the Bloomberg administration

Gowanus Canal Corridor Framework (2008–2009)

What is it? In 2008, the city studied the Gowanus Canal for a potential rezoning, in part to allow for more housing development. While the rezoning didn't end up happening, the study fueled developer speculation.

Who was in charge? NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) under the Bloomberg administration

Bridging Gowanus (2013–2015)

What is it? A community planning initiative focused on issues impacting the neighborhood, like environmental sustainability, preserving manufacturing jobs, and creating affordable housing. The plan was designed to shape a vision for the community before the city proposed a rezoning. DCP has said that ideas in Bridging Gowanus will help shape their rezoning proposal.

Who was in charge? Council Member Brad Lander led the initiative, supported by all local elected officials. Pratt Center for Community Development provided planning expertise and assistance, with significant public involvement.

PUBLIC HOUSING

ONGOING

NYCHA Gowanus Houses Community Center Renovation (2014–Ongoing)

What is it? The Gowanus Houses Community Center has been mostly closed to residents for more than a decade. With FUREE's organizing support, Council Member Levin set aside nearly \$500k in 2014 from his Participatory Budgeting process to pay for capital upgrades to re-open the center. In 2017, Mayor de Blasio publicly committed to re-open the center and offer programming for residents of all ages. With the release of the Gowanus draft zoning proposal in February 2019, the City has committed \$4 million to renovating and reopening the center.

Who was in charge? New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA); NYC Department of Youth and Community Development

How are community members involved? Gowanus Houses RA Leaders, Fifth Avenue Committee, FUREE, and Council Member Levin have convened a working group to reopen the center and offer temporary programming.

NYCHA Wyckoff Infill (2015–Ongoing)

What is it? As part of a plan to close its budget gap, NYCHA is allowing private developers to build on public housing land. NYCHA chose Wyckoff Gardens as one of the first sites for a new residential development. A developer was selected in January 2018 but they will have to go through the City's land use approval process (ULURP) to move ahead. Their proposed building will likely be 16 stories tall and include 500 apartments—50% affordable housing and 50% market-rate. They will pay \$37 million to NYCHA, and half of that (\$18.5 million) will go to Wyckoff Gardens.

Who's in charge? NYCHA

How are community members involved? A resident advisory committee at Wyckoff Gardens has provided input to NYCHA on the development process. The 50/50 infill plan must also go through the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP).

Gowanus Houses NYCHA Sandy Recovery Work (2015–present)

What is it? Funding to restore and repair buildings and grounds damaged by Hurricane Sandy, and make the buildings more resilient to future storms.

Who's in charge? Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); NYCHA

How are community members involved? NYCHA provides updates through its Superstorm Sandy Recovery Program. Fifth Avenue Committee and FUREE are continuing to push for more resident involvement.

NYCHA PACT/RAD Warren Street Houses (2018–Ongoing)

What is it? As part of a plan to close its budget gap, NYCHA is participating in HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, which NYCHA calls Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT). RAD/PACT brings private developers into the ownership and management of public housing. In 2018, NYCHA announced that Warren Street Houses would be included in the PACT/RAD program. In 2019 NYCHA put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Warren Street Houses, which is the first step in the process. Many residents are concerned about the oversight of private developers, especially around RAD relocation rules and their right to return to their homes.

Who was in charge? NYCHA; US Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

How are community members involved? NYCHA held public info sessions on PACT for Warren Street residents. FUREE held separate public info sessions.

NYCHA Legal Challenges (2017–Ongoing)

What is it? NYCHA has been sued many times for mismanagement and failure to keep residents' homes in decent, safe, and sanitary condition. Lawsuits have focused on mold issues, lead paint, heating, elevators, and vermin, among other problems. In 2019, NYCHA reached an agreement with the federal government and the City that will require NYCHA to meet strict standards for improvement of its properties. This will be overseen by a federal monitor.

Who was in charge? A federal judge; a federal monitor; HUD; the mayor

How are community members involved? Local NYCHA residents have testified in various hearings and court proceedings with FAC and FUREE support. NYCHA Resident Association leadership is also represented in legal challenges against NYCHA.