

# Urban Open Spaces

Reinventing Older Communities Conference

March 26, 2007

Jack T. Linn

Assistant Commission/Senior Counselor

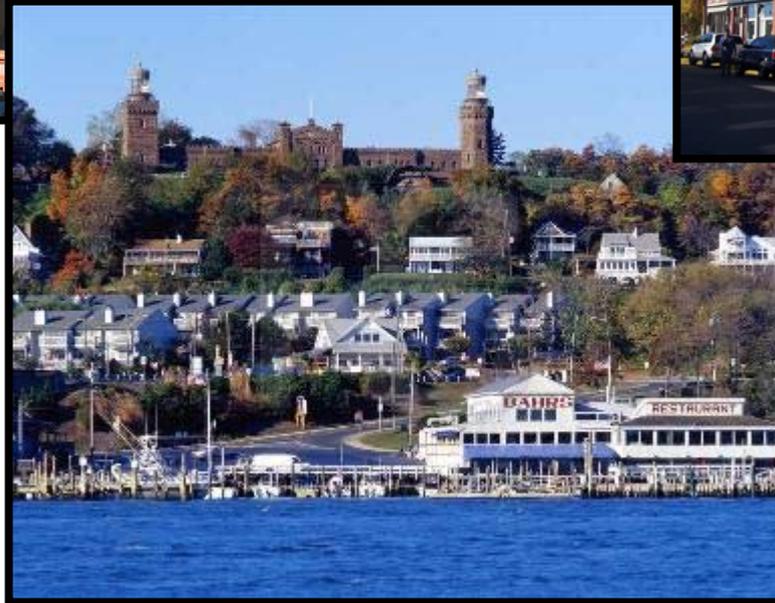
**New York City Parks and Recreation**



Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

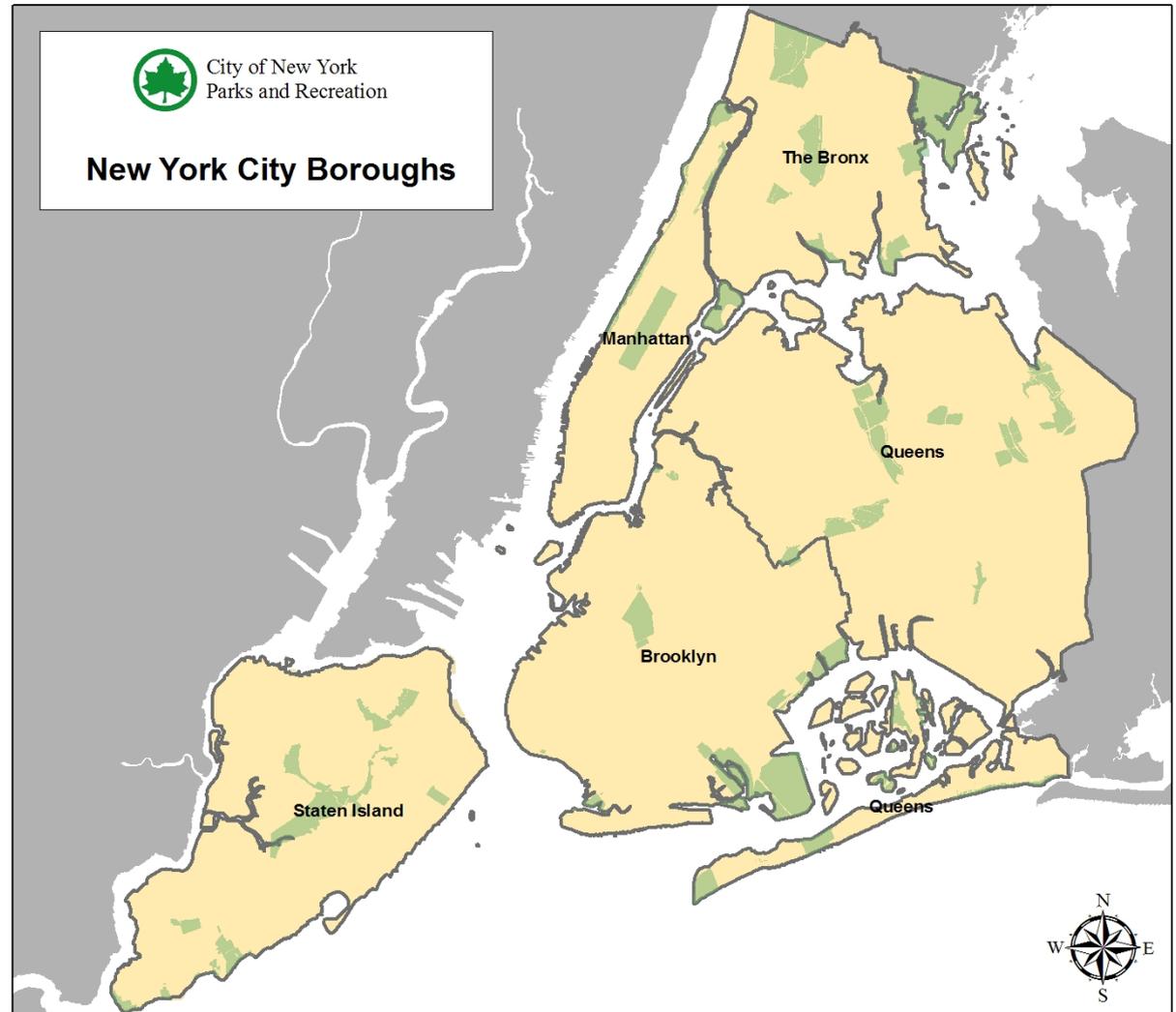
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation

# New York City Is a Group of Small Towns on the Hudson River

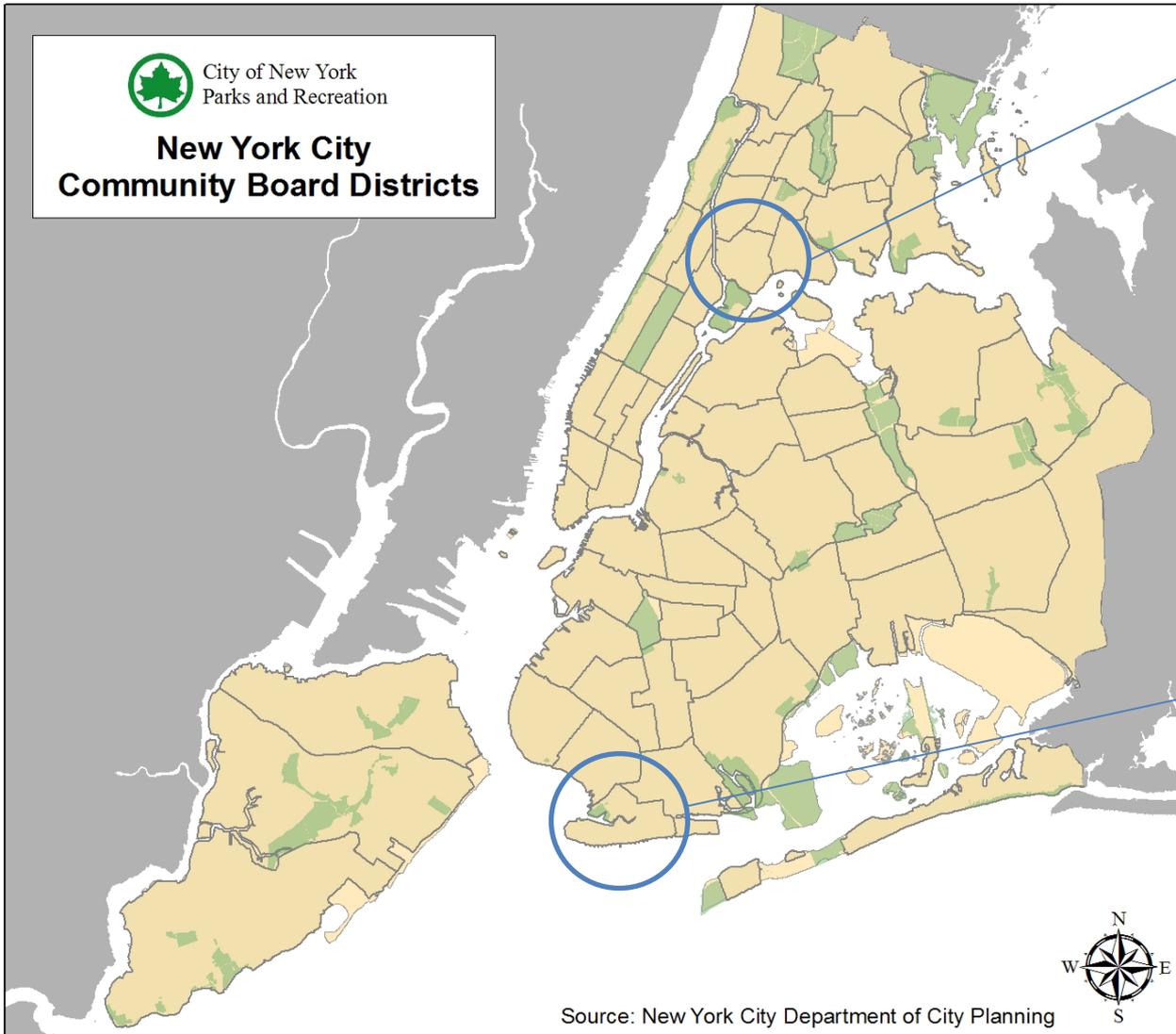


# The City Is Divided into 5 Boroughs

The borough of Manhattan has about the same population as Philadelphia, 1.5 million.



# The 5 Boroughs Are Divided into 59 Community Districts



Bronx Community Board 1  
has a population of 85,000,  
similar to Trenton, NJ.

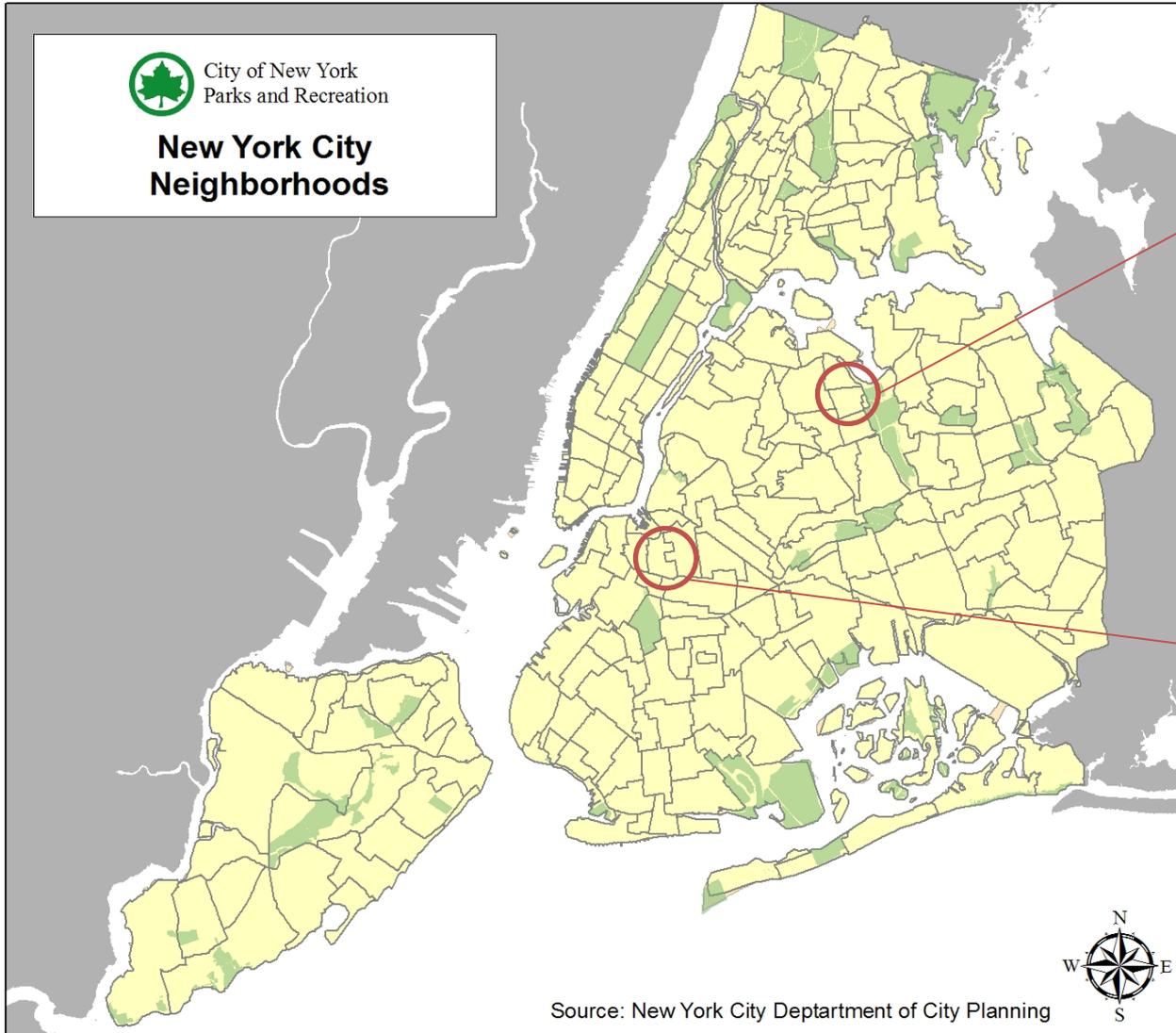
Brooklyn Community Board 13  
has a population of 106,000  
similar to Allentown, PA

# The Community Districts Are Divided into 198 Neighborhoods, the Basic Building Blocks for Planning



City of New York  
Parks and Recreation

## New York City Neighborhoods

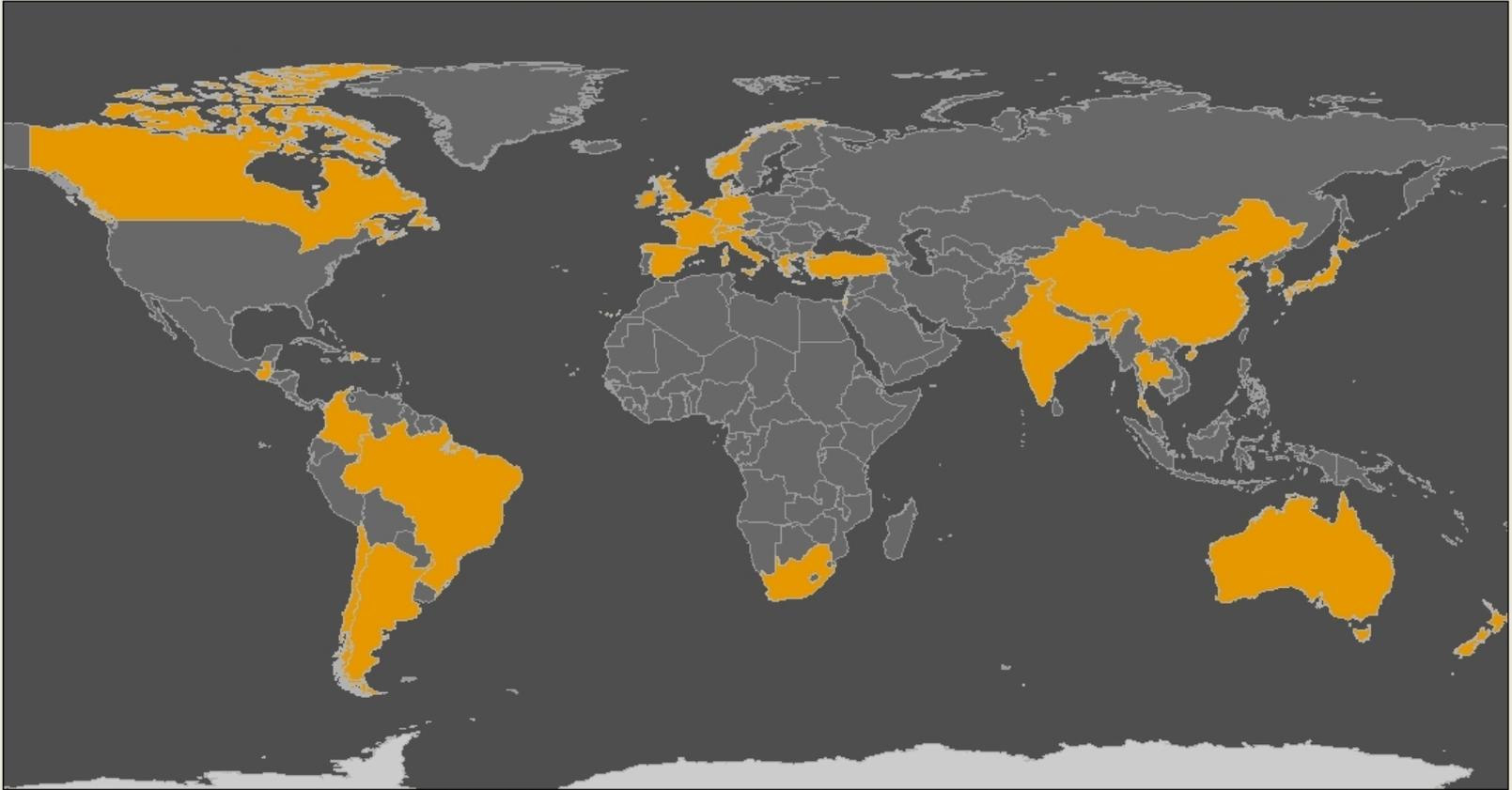


North Corona, in Queens,  
has a population of 47,000,  
similar to Harrisburg, PA.

Clinton Hill, Brooklyn,  
has a population of 33,000,  
similar to Dover, DE.

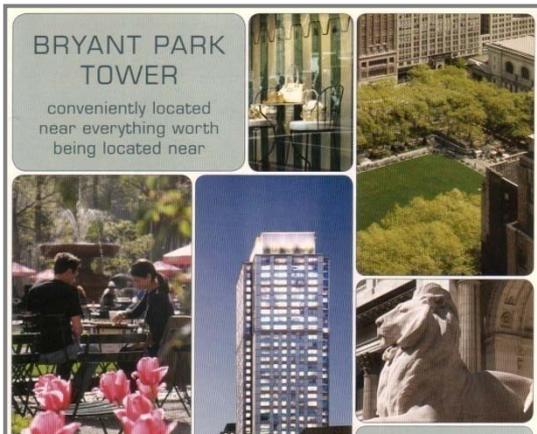
Source: New York City Department of City Planning

# Park Managers Around the Globe Speak the Same Language



# We Are All in the Real Estate Business

## Creating Parks, Olmsted



In 2002, the accounting firm of Ernst & Young found that commercial rental values around Bryant Park had increased by as much as 225%

after revitalization of the park.

RESIDENCES  
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## Maintaining Parks, Crompton

*Table 2  
 Frederick Law Olmsted's Documentation of the Impact of Central Park on the  
 Property Tax Base of the Three Proximate Wards*

Assessed value in 1873	\$236,081,515.00
Assessed value in 1856	26,429,565.00
Showing an increased valuation of	\$209,651,950.00
The total expenditure for construction, from May 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1857 to January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1874, is	\$8,873,671.50
The cost of land of the Park to the city is	5,028,844.10
The cost of the Park to the city is	\$13,902,515.06
The rate of tax for the year 1873 is 2 50, yielding on the increase of valuation as above stated, increase of tax amounting to \$5,241,298.75.	
Total increase of tax in three wards	\$5,241,298.75
The annual interest on the cost of land and improvement of the Park, up to this time, at six percent	\$834,150.94
Deduct one percent, on \$399,300 of stock, issued at five percent	3,933.00
	830,157.94
Excess of increase of tax, in three wards, over interest on cost of land and improvements	\$4,411,140.81

Source: Fox, T. (1990)

## Reclaiming Parks, Bryant Park

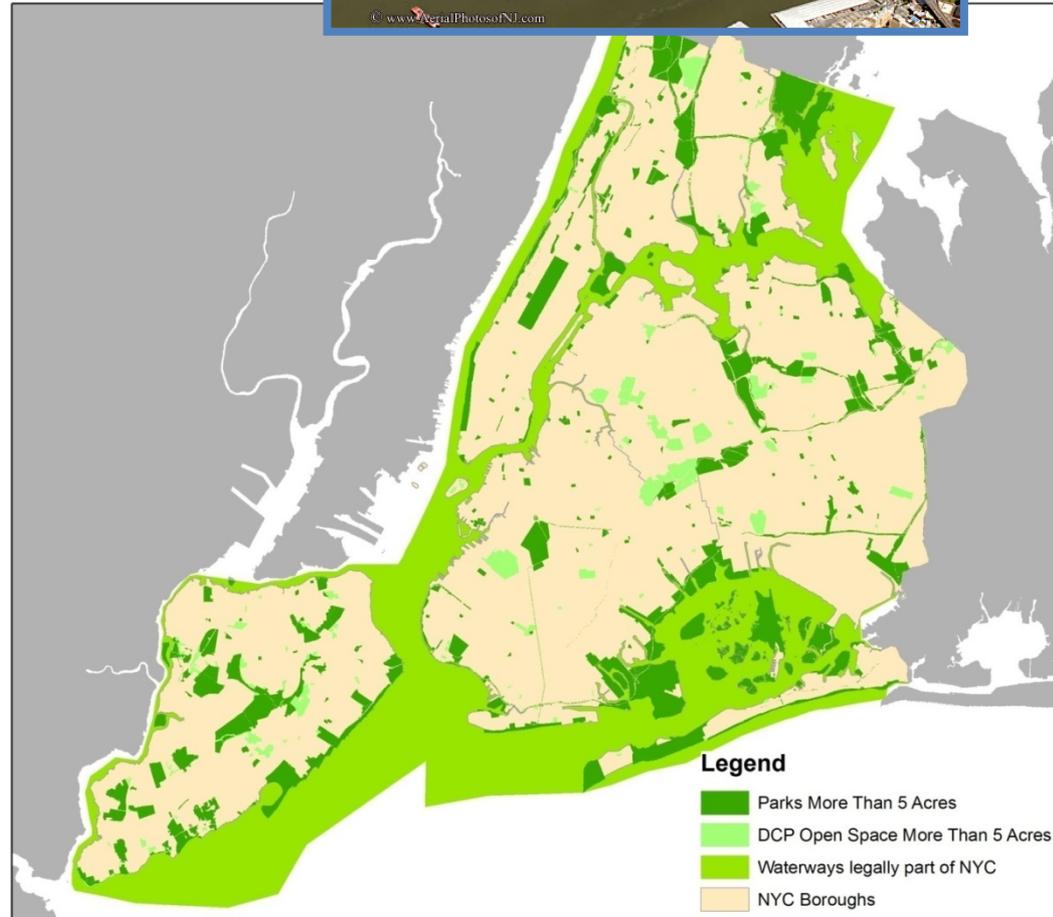
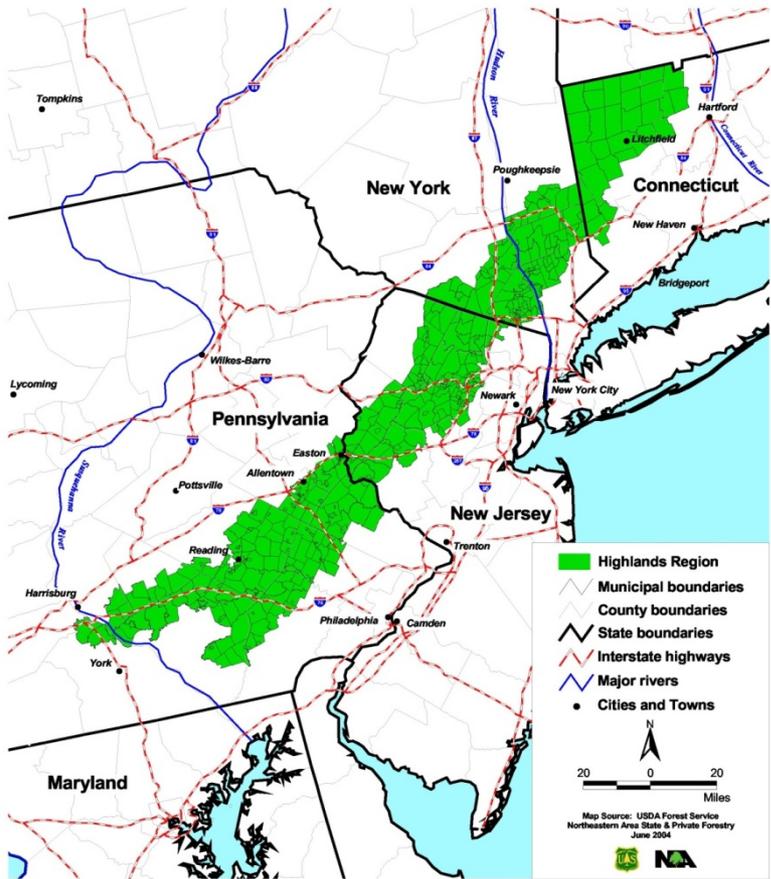
In a 2004 article John Crompton of Texas A&M University connected price premiums for homes within 500 feet of a park to park quality:

“average” quality	added 5%,
“above average”	added 10%,
“unusual excellence”	added 15%.

# Geography Defines Opportunity



## Highlands Region PA-NJ-NY-CT



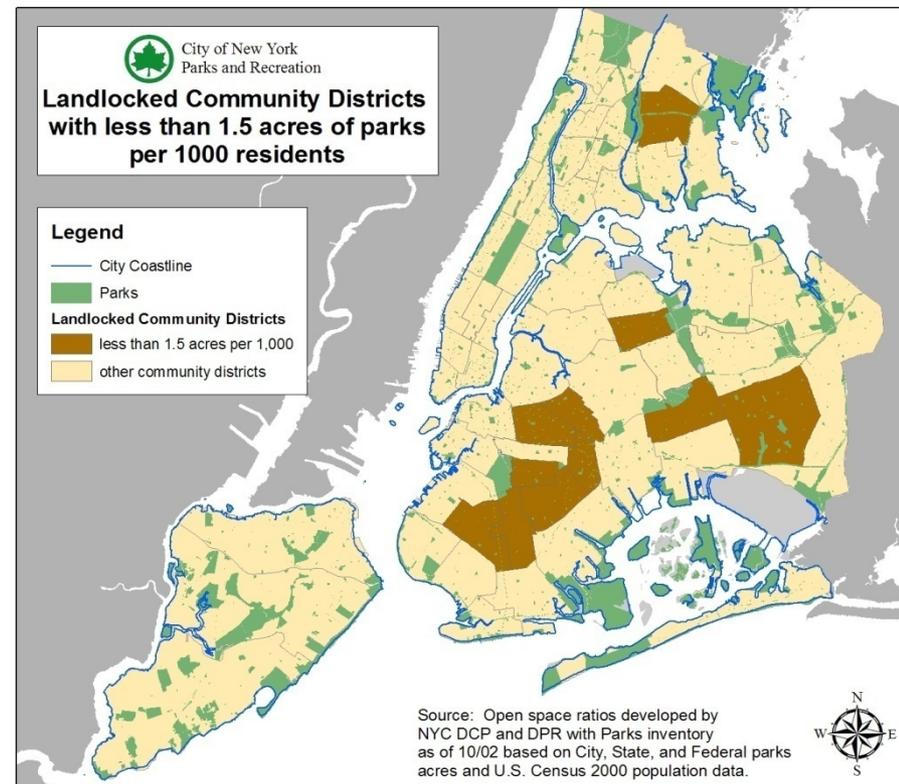
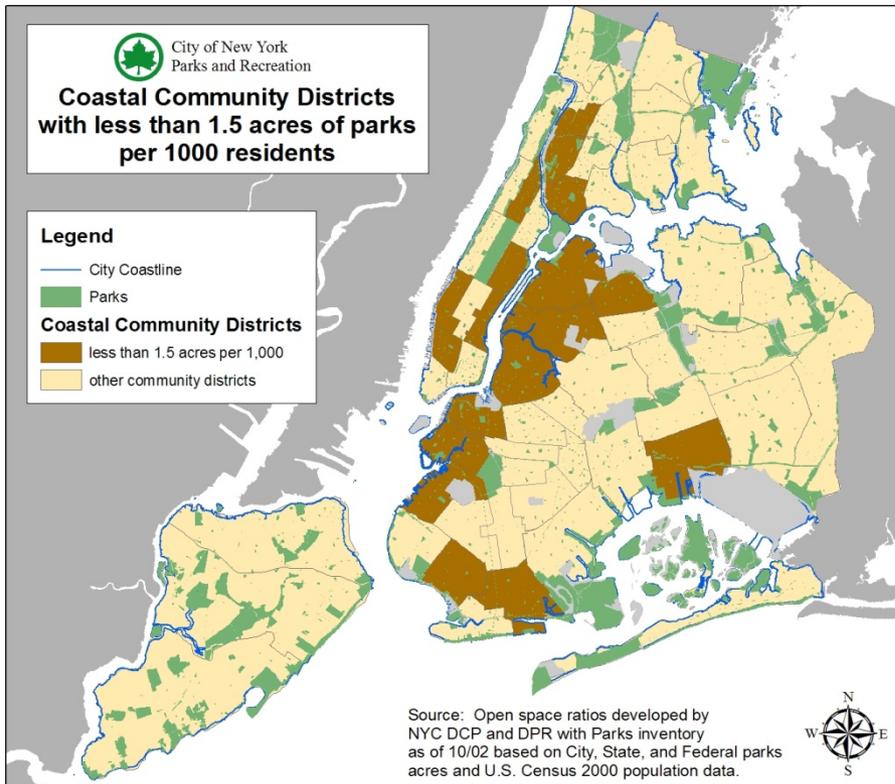
### Legend

- Parks More Than 5 Acres
- DCP Open Space More Than 5 Acres
- Waterways legally part of NYC
- NYC Boroughs

For New York, the country is not far from the city.

In New York, open water is open space.

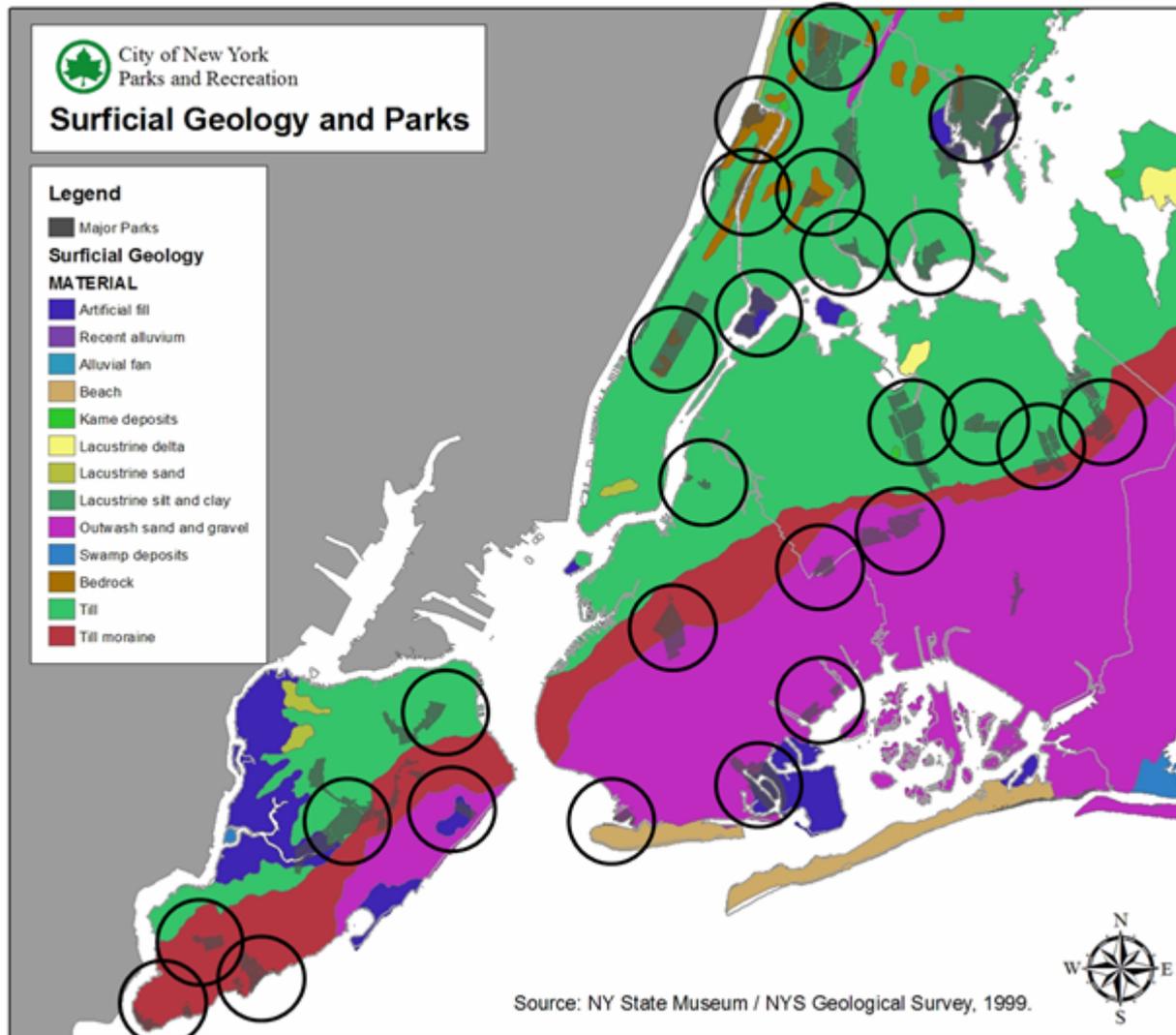
# For Congested Neighborhoods, Access to the Waterfront Can Be Transformative.



Finding new open space for landlocked neighborhoods  
is more difficult in a developed city.

# Yesterday's Parks: Wet, Steep, Rocky, Remote

## Unwanted Land



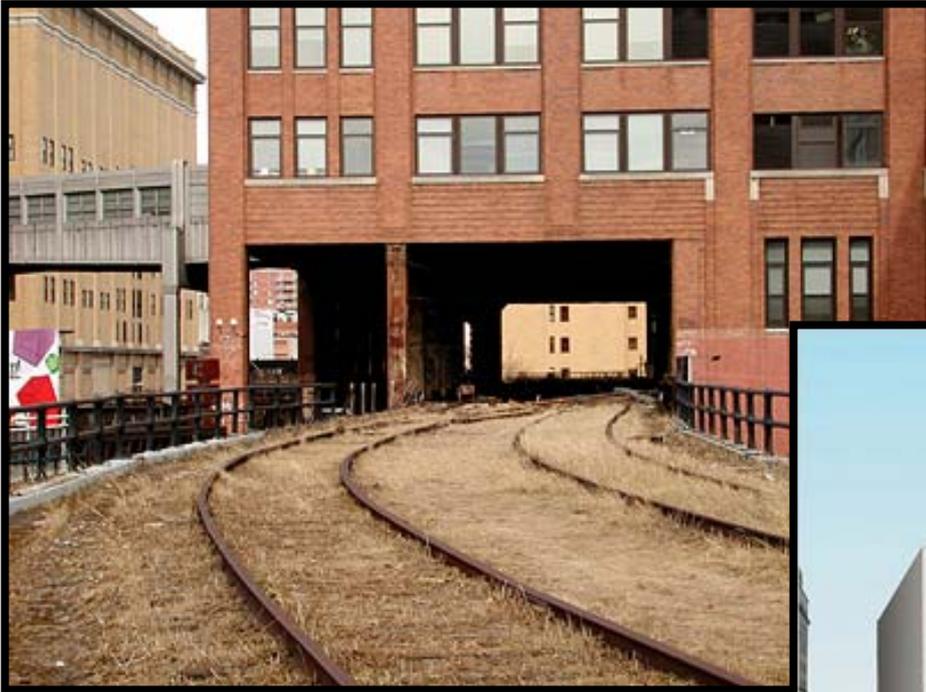
# Today's Parks: Toxic

## Recycled Industrial Land

### Fresh Kills Park, Staten Island



# The High Line Park, Manhattan



Past Train Line



Future Park

# Concrete Plant Park, The Bronx



Current Construction Progress



Design

# Gas Tank Park, Queens



Past



Current



# Greenpoint-Williamsburg Waterfront, Brooklyn



# Today's Parks: Exotic

Shared Jurisdiction, Complex Engineering, on Rooftops



Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center 



 Riverbank State Park, Hudson River

# Seawalls, Pilings, Decks, Tunnels



Carl Schurz Park over East River Drive



East River Park Seawall



Battery Park Over Subway Tunnel

# Today's Parks: Expensive



4 acres for \$100 million!

# The Ideal Park System Is One You Can Afford – In Bad Times

## Housing, Bank Troubles Deepen

*Foreclosures Reach A New Record; Home Equity Falls*

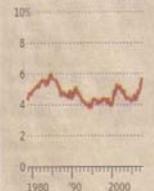
By SUDEEP REDDY AND SARA MURRAY

Two crucial barometers of the nation's housing market have worsened markedly in recent months, ratcheting up pressure on policy makers in Washington for action to stem the growing housing crisis and its widening impact on the nation's financial system.

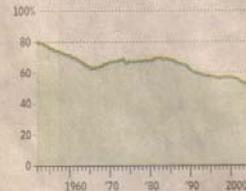
Among the latest trouble signals, the number of American homes entering foreclosure rose to the highest level on record in

### Losing Ground

More people are behind on their payments  
Delinquency rate on residential mortgages\*



Overall, homeowners now own less than half of the equity in their houses  
Homeowner equity as a percentage of the value of household real estate



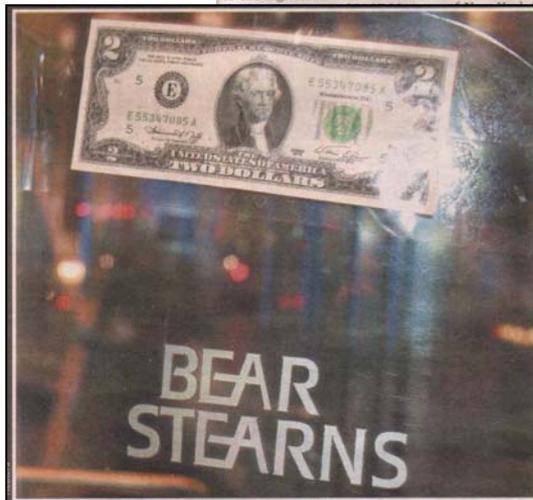
\*As a percentage of total loans outstanding; doesn't include loans in the process of foreclosure  
Source: Mortgage Bankers Association; Federal Reserve

resident Timothy in a speech. The government stepped in to jump-start the market by increasing the size of the mortgage that can be bought through government-sponsored mortgage companies like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and insured by the Federal Housing Administration. The administration was mandated to enact economic stimulus law. Home values are declining, and the first-time homebuyers, in the aggregate, own less than half the

value of their houses. Their share of home equity—the market value of a home minus the size of its mortgage—dropped to 47.9% in the final three months of 2007, down one percentage point from the third quarter, the Fed said in a quarterly report. Homeowner equity as a percentage of home values has been falling from a high of more than 80% since 1945, when the data started being recorded, but the decline generally has been a result of mortgage debt rising faster than home prices. Lately, the downturn in home values has been even steeper. Please turn to page A1.

### Rattles Markets

Market woes trigger stock selloff .....C  
New mortgage-firm practices grow .....A  
Investors protect CEOs' bonuses .....AL

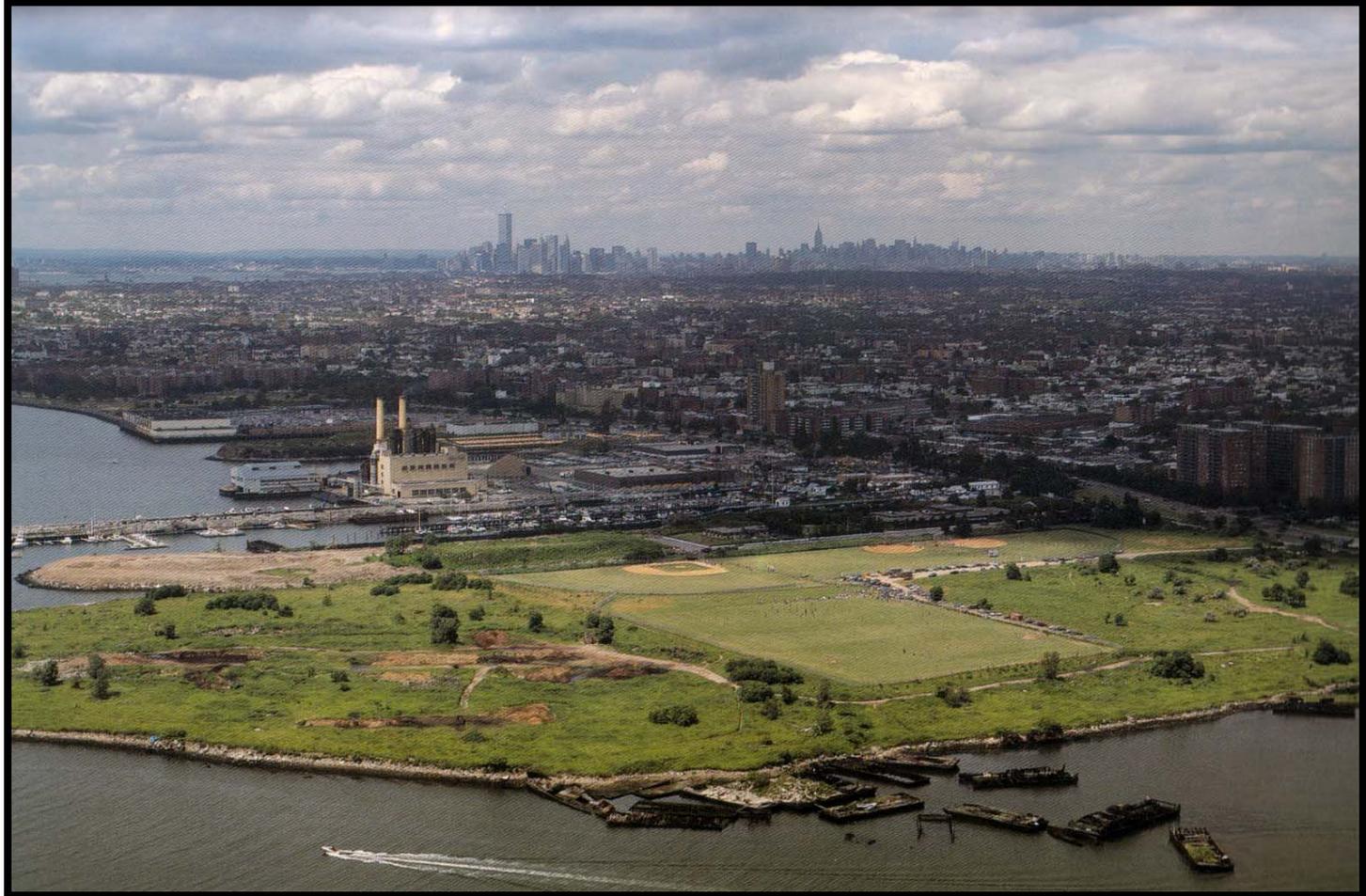


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# Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030

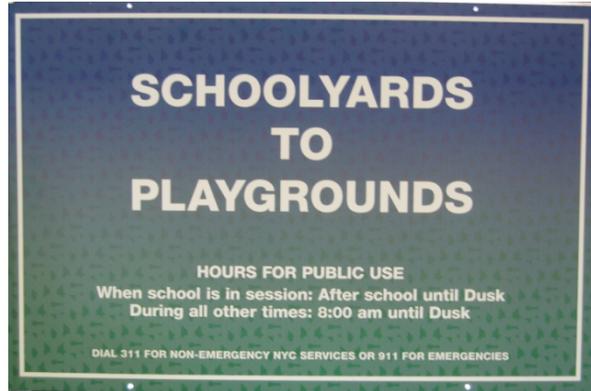
## Guiding Principle: Make the Most of What We Have

### Complete Unfinished Regional Parks

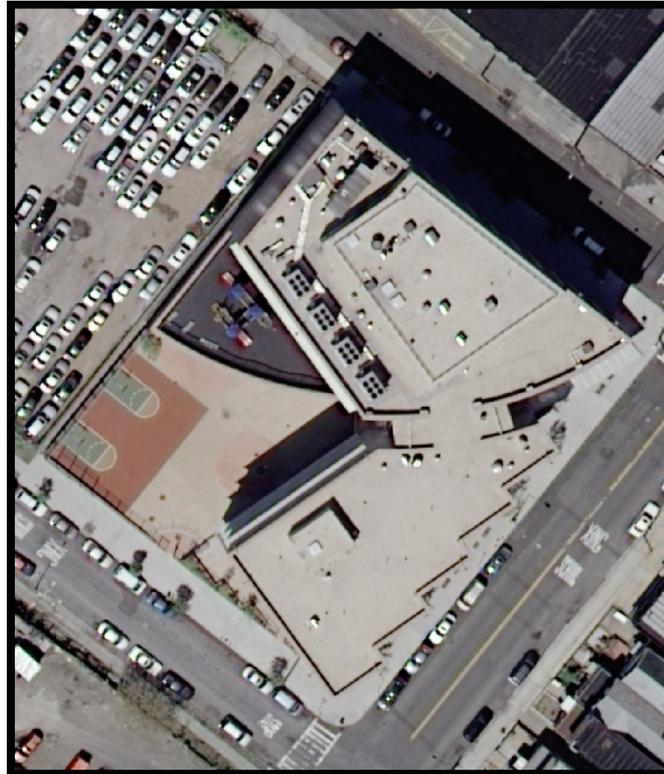


78 acres to be developed for \$40 million

# Open More Schoolyards as Public Playgrounds



PS 161 Queens



PS 69 Brooklyn

## PS 208 Brooklyn



### MORE:

New entrances off the street allow the park to remain open during "park hours" and closed off during school hours.

Steel fencing will be added around the entire space to address both security concerns and aesthetics.

A generous amount of planting will be added to the space.

Schematic Design

# Create More Greenstreets



Before



After

# Build More Bikeways



Harlem River Greenway

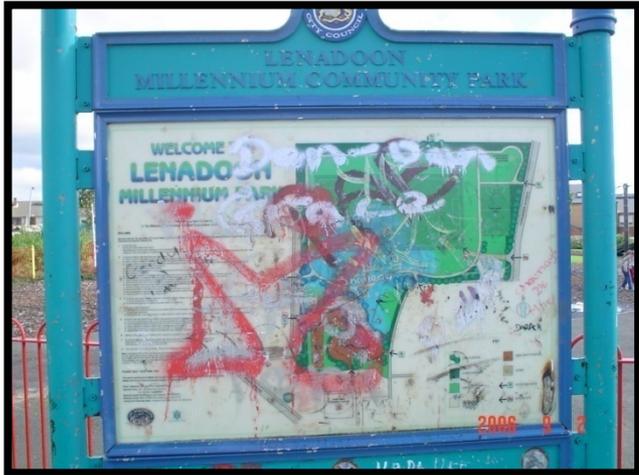


Riverside Park

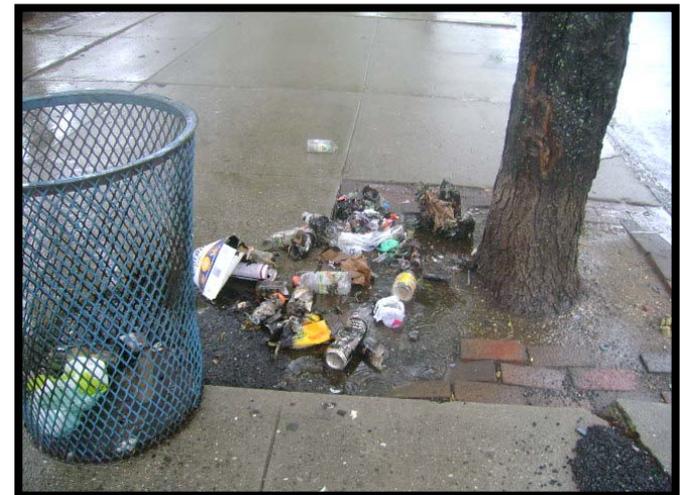
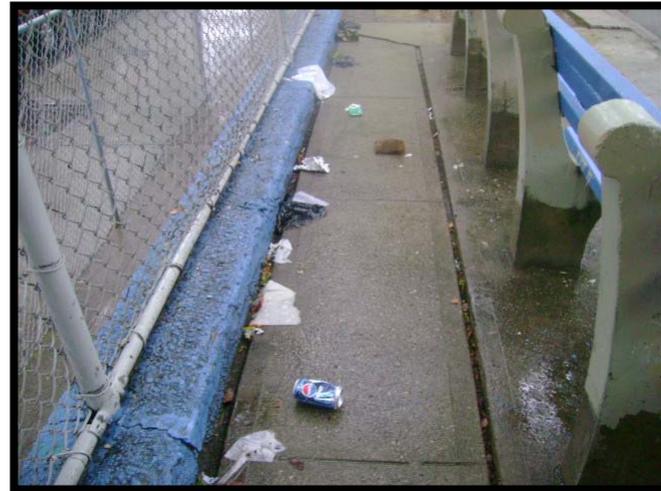


9th Ave Bike Lane

# Other Things To Do: Fix Broken Windows



Graffiti in Parks,  
Northern Ireland



Litter in Playground 52, Bronx

# Attract the Public with Events, Food and Art



# Make the City Bloom: Community Gardens



# The Daffodil Project



# The Smallest Park in the City

