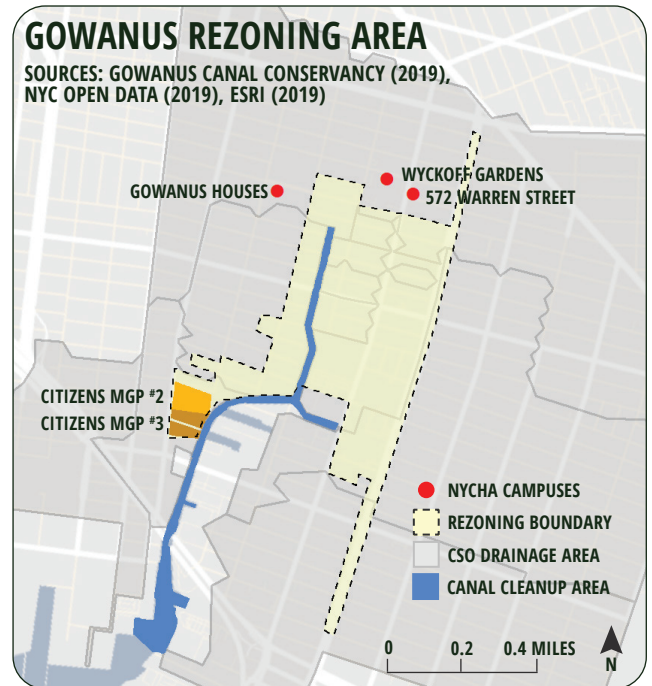


# GOWANUS: A CASE FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SPECIAL DISTRICT AND BEYOND

THE VALUE OF GOWANUS REZONING, ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP ACTIONS, AND A PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SPECIAL DISTRICT

GOWANUS NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION FOR JUSTICE | BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

The Gowanus neighborhood in Brooklyn, NYC, which is centered around the Gowanus Canal, is undergoing significant changes. Beginning in 2020, the neighborhood is slated to be rezoned into a mixed residential, commercial, and manufacturing area. The rezoning process is expected to spur rapid property value growth. In addition, the neighborhood rezoning will result in significant additions to public and privately owned open space. Meanwhile, the Gowanus Canal, a designated U.S. EPA Superfund site, will soon undergo remediation. Cleanup will focus on the canal itself, as well as three former manufactured gas plant sites adjacent to the canal. The City of New York and the U.S. EPA, through the Natural Resource Damages Assessment process, have a critical opportunity to invest in accessible public space and green infrastructure as part of the rezoning and Superfund cleanup.



## ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENTS

Fifth Avenue Committee, Gowanus Canal Conservancy, and other community advocates in the Gowanus Neighborhood Coalition for Justice (GNCJ) are pushing the City to go above and beyond the current proposal to integrate a range of improvements, including investment in public parks and streetscapes; improvements to stormwater, sewer and flood management infrastructure; increases in vegetation and tree canopy; and investments in health and social resilience in public housing developments and the broader community. These proposed investments would build wealth and wellbeing among long-term residents who have borne the burden of contamination for decades.

## \$2 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC VALUE GENERATED BY GNCJ PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS



### \$998,000 URBAN HEAT ISLAND MITIGATION

Increasing tree canopy and vegetation throughout the neighborhood can mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect and lower temperatures during extreme heat days, reducing household energy costs and reducing heat-related mortality rates.



### \$27,000 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BENEFITS

Increasing recreational access through new and improved amenities also improves physical health. Improved physical health can be valued in terms of avoided healthcare costs associated with obesity.



### \$395,000 ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Increasing green infrastructure throughout the neighborhood will build community resilience to flooding, improve local air quality, mitigate carbon pollution, and reduce stormwater management costs. These investments generate public benefits and save money for the City.



### \$46,000 RECREATIONAL BENEFITS

Adding public parks and open spaces in Gowanus through improvements to existing facilities (e.g. Thomas Greene Park) and adding new parks (e.g. Gowanus Green) increases recreational access and improves wellbeing of nearby residents.



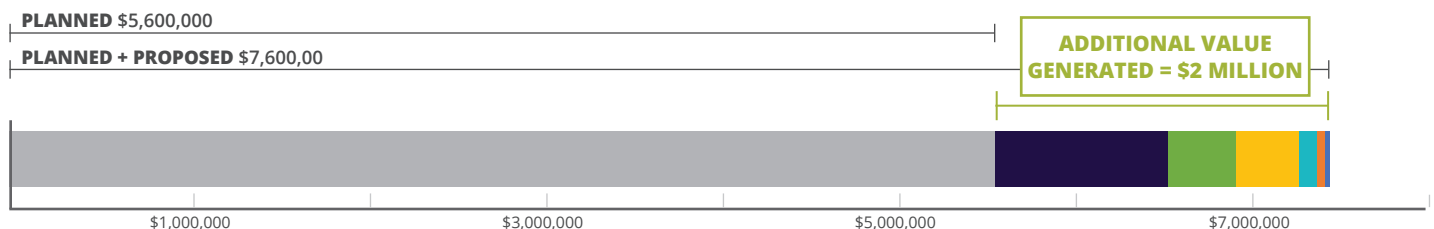
### \$377,000 MOLD REMEDIATION BENEFITS

Mold exposure is closely linked to asthma, a disease whose burden includes the additional economic and social costs of healthcare expenditures and disruptions to work and school. Remediating long-standing mold issues on NYCHA campuses in Gowanus is a critical and much needed investment in the wellbeing of public housing residents.



### \$90,000 SOLAR ENERGY SAVINGS

Installing solar panels on NYCHA buildings in Gowanus would generate direct savings from exporting solar electricity. These savings could be passed on to residents via re-investment in other necessary NYCHA maintenance and/or resident services.



# VALUE GENERATED BY PLANNED & PROPOSED GOWANUS NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

## IMPROVEMENT SITE

## INVESTMENT SOURCE

### PLANNED BY THE CITY

**Gowanus Canal Cleanup Area** dredge and cap contaminated sediment, install CSO tanks

**Thomas Greene Park – Remediation**

**Citizens MGP Parcel 2** cap

**Citizens MGP Parcel 3** cap

**New City Park – N. Canal CSO Facility Park**

**Citizens MGP Parcel 2 / Public Place / Gowanus Green**

**Waterfront Esplanades** new outdoor space with GI

### PROPOSED BY GNCJ

**Thomas Greene Park Improvements**

**New City Park – DEP Historic Pump House and Head of Canal Open Space**

**New City Park – Under the Tracks**

**Proposed Pedestrian Bridge**

**Salt Lot Esplanade** install swales

**Salt Lot and Turning Basin** restore to salt marsh

**Street Ends** install trees and swales

**Right-of-Way Areas** install trees and rain gardens

**NYCHA Campus Improvements** rooftop solar

**NYCHA Campus Improvements** mold remediation

PRP & City Capital

PRP

PRP

City Capital

City Capital

Private Dev.

Private Dev.

City Capital & PRP

City Capital

City Capital

City Capital or Private Dev.

City Capital

PRP

City Capital and/or Private Dev.

City Capital

City Capital

City Capital



This project was completed in partnership with Fifth Avenue Committee and the Gowanus Canal Conservancy, with funding support from the Kresge Foundation. Visit [fifthave.org](http://fifthave.org) or [www.gowanuscanalconservancy.org](http://www.gowanuscanalconservancy.org) for full technical summary of this economic valuation.

GIS sources: Gowanus Canal Conservancy (2019), NYC Open data (2019), ESRI (2019)

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