Hearing before the New York City Council
Committees Jointly on Parks & Recreation and Recovery and Resiliency
Oversight: Recovery: Parks Efforts following Superstorm Sandy
June 19, 2014

Testimony By: Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner

Good afternoon Chairs Levine, Treyger, and members of both the Parks and Recreation and Recover and Resiliency committees. I am Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner for the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. Thank you for allowing me to speak before you today about our work in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.

Sandy forever changed the landscape of this City. The storm forced us to rethink our policies, procedures, and park development plans. We shared much of this with the Council in February of last year. What we will do today is to provide an overview of our efforts around Resiliency and our thoughts related to building for the future.

The damage caused by Superstorm Sandy was catastrophic. We estimate over \$830 million in damages to parks properties citywide. Aside from the monetary damages, Sandy inundated roughly 5,700 acres of our 29,000 acre Park system and damaged approximately 400 Park sites. With 27 percent of the City's shoreline being in our jurisdiction, our beaches bore the brunt of the storm surge as nearly 3 million cubic yards of sand were displaced from our beaches.

Sandy's impact on natural resources was equally as destructive as nearly 20,000 trees in NYC's Parks, natural areas, parkland and streets were damaged. In addition, we estimate an additional 10,000 trees suffered salt water inundation. This was by far the biggest storm in terms of tree damage the City has ever faced. To put it in perspective, a total of 3,444 street trees were lost during Hurricane Irene.

We learned several lessons from the storm. First was that where properly designed, parks and other open spaces can withstand the blow of a severe storm. Additionally in many cases, they acted as the first line of defense providing an all too important role during a time when areas of the City needed as much protection as possible.

Post-Storm Clean-Up and Recovery

Our teams in the Capital division, led by Deputy Commissioner Therese Braddick, worked non-stop to clean, repair and open our Parks with a particular focus on the 14 miles of New York City's eight beaches. We wanted to complete as much as possible in time for the 2013 Beach season. Our goal was not only rebuild, but to do so with resiliency in mind – integrating strategies to protect and enhance the community, public space and infrastructure. I would like to share a few examples of our work around the community.

Our goal was to clean up our sites, inspect to ensure that sites were safe, open up where possible, then rebuild the damaged sited with a focus on resiliency. Doing so required a tremendous amount of planning and coordination with a number of agencies across City, State and Federal levels. While the list of agencies we partnered with to date is extensive, we would like to thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State Department of Environmental Conversation and all of our sister agencies for their invaluable partnership.

Parks staff inspected our almost 2,000 parks and playgrounds to assess damage. We are proud of what we were able to accomplish. To date, 99% of our properties are open and our inspections have identified over \$830 million in damages to 420 Parks sites. In Brooklyn, working with the Army Corps of Engineers, 600,000 cubic yards of sand was pumped on the beaches in the Coney Island area. Steeplechase Pier was reconstructed and we installed storm resilient modular buildings elevated to the 100 year flood plain.

In Brooklyn, along the Coney Island Boardwalk we are working to rebuild the area stronger and more resilient. A major project currently occurring is the rebuilding of Nautilus Park. Since Superstorm Sandy, NYC Parks has dedicated over \$1 million towards enhancing this outdoor space. Nautilus Park was damaged during the storm, especially the play equipment which was corroded due to the saltwater inundation. This construction includes handball courts, basketball courts, replacement of play equipment and benches.

In Rockaway, which bore the brunt of the storm, we continue to work to build in a manner that not only returns the beach and boardwalk to its former glory, but builds for the future. We have constructed a number of boardwalk islands, installed baffle walls, berms and the aforementioned modular buildings. We used recaptured boardwalk wood washed away by the storm to build new elevated seating areas. As we speak, the Army Corps of Engineers are currently working to pump 3.6 million cubic yards of sand on to the beach and we have renovated our buildings to elevate utilities and incorporate elements to make our facilities as watertight as possible.

In Staten Island, we repaired 2.5 miles of boardwalk and installed over 26,000 linear feet of interim shoreline protection from South Beach to Conference House Park.

In the Bronx, we repaired the Orchard Beach Promenade and repaired paving stones that were uplifted during the storm. As evident by the recent concert at Orchard Beach featuring Jennifer Lopez, we believe Orchard Beach is back and is being enjoyed by everyone.

Engagement

Parks are most resilient where there is a strong sense of community stewardship and opportunities for engagement. We heard this loud and clear throughout the City, most notably in the Rockaways where the community wanted to partner with our throughout the rebuilding process.

In Rockaway, Parks led a conceptual planning process that created a blueprint for a comprehensive park system from Beach 2nd to Beach 149th Streets, beach to bay. We held several community meetings and are pleased to have the support of Queens Community Board 14, local elected officials including Council Members Ulrich and Richards as well as civic and community leaders. The plan includes recommendations to replace recreational amenities lost in Superstorm Sandy. These amenities are being built with resiliency in mind.

Community stewardship is one of the cornerstones of our efforts. In the aftermath of the storm, our Partnership for Parks program, working with NYC Service, facilitated 125 clean-up events bringing nearly 8,000 volunteers to our parks, playgrounds, beaches, and recreation centers. Our volunteers collected more than 22,000 bags of debris alone.

Our Jamaica Bay – Rockaway Parks Restoration Corps has also worked to enhance stewardship. Our Corps advances physical and social resiliency by offering employment and educational opportunities that result in ecological restoration and community protection. In 2013, the Corps hired 200 trainees to perform clean-up work and community outreach after Superstorm Sandy. The Corps moved 125,000 cubic yards of sand, collected over 10,120 bags of debris, maintained over 5,700 young street trees, planted 7,485 plants and removed 64 dead plants.

Moving Forward

27 percent of the City's shoreline is in Parks' jurisdiction. Superstorm Sandy foreshadowed the on-going challenges climate change and sea level rise will pose on open spaces, communities, infrastructure, and the waterfront. Data from the New York Panel on Climate Change indicates that sea level rise and climate change present vast challenges to open spaces and communities. By the 2020s, approximately 6600 acres of parkland will be in the 100-year floodplain. By the 2050s, parkland in the 100-year floodplain will increase to 7400 acres. Climate change will impact open space and neighboring communities through higher temperatures, sea level rise, increased precipitation and flooding, and ecosystem changes.

City-wide Recovery and Resilience Initiatives

There are two major plans that New York City is implementing concurrently in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. The first plan created by New York City, "A Stronger, More Resilient New York," increases resiliency through 257 initiatives that aim to strengthen coastal defenses, as well as upgrade and protect infrastructure, to make our neighborhoods safer and more vibrant. Mayor de Blasio then released, "One City, Rebuilding Together," a report to accelerate Sandy recovery and expand the city's climate resiliency plan in four ways. The report seeks to enhance policy and planning, expedite efforts to secure Federal funds, continue collaboration with State efforts, and expand economic opportunity for all New Yorkers.

The City's plan for "A Stronger, More Resilient New York" outlined over 30 Parks-related initiatives including updating landscape design guidelines, planning and implementation for coastal Parks, beach nourishment and coastal protection planning for Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens through partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Jamaica Bay area restoration, studies and resiliency coordination with the National Park Service, addressing at-risk operations and recreation facilities, increasing the health of natural systems and areas through nature-based design and restoration, forest and wetland management, and green infrastructure.

Building & Supporting Communities

Waterfront Inspections

To cover ongoing waterfront inspections, we have secured \$2.5 million in funding for a systematic waterfront infrastructure inspection program. Parks manages 148 miles of natural and built waterfront shoreline. This initial funding stream will cover four years of inspections of the built waterfront.

Design and Planning for the Flood Zone

NYC Parks are critical pieces of community infrastructure and serve as buffers during storm events. We are currently planning for the future by creating a comprehensive set of design guidelines for parks and facilities in areas at risk for damage by catastrophic storms, flooding and sea-level rise. Design and Planning for the Flood Zone, will be an online resource outlining best practices in risk assessment, planning, design, construction, and management of parks and facilities in the flood zone. This online tool will cover bulkheads, esplanades, beaches, boardwalks, wetlands, natural areas, playgrounds, adult fitness equipment, athletic fields, recreation centers, cultural resources, historic properties, marinas, brownfield sites, upland flood control, forested areas, street trees, and green infrastructure.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The aforementioned initiatives are complementary to the resiliency measures we have been coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement. The Army Corp. has been critical in advancing shoreline protection in the Rockaways, Brighton Beach and Coney Island, as well as Plumb Beach.

Coordinated projects with the Army Corps of Engineers comprises Rockaways Phase I, where 3.5 million cubic yards of sand replenishment was performed and a betterment agreement for higher dunes was put in place. In Brighton Beach and Coney Island, as previously indicated, there was 600,000 cubic yards of sand replenished. Further, Plumb Beach had 130,000 cubic yards of sand replenished, 2 T-groins, and 200ft of breakwater installed.

Continued coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers is critical to advance the shoreline protection of Staten Island. This includes the completion of Phase I beach protection alternatives for Fort Wadsworth up to Oakwood Beach and a Phase II study of Great Kills to Tottenville.

Another critical shoreline protection location is the Jamaica Bay area. To meet our resiliency goals NYC Parks and the Army Corps are working for a timely completion of the reformulation study for beachfront protections and the feasibility study for bay side protections. These studies may lead to a 6 to 12 month delay.

New York Rising

Broad collaboration and forward-thinking planning are crucial towards ensuring future resilience. NYC Parks is actively partnering with the New York State Office of Storm Recovery and the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resilience (ORR) to advance resiliency through NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program projects. Many of these projects have been funded and include coastal protection planning, dune improvements, streetscape improvements, bioswales, and beach grass plantings in Coney Island.

Rebuild By Design

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development launched the Rebuild by Design competition to innovative design solutions for resilience. Winning projects include The BIG U at East River Park which was awarded \$335 million for bridging berms that provide protection, waterfront accessibility, and passive recreation. In Staten Island, Tottenville was awarded \$60 million for a living breakwater project that includes breakwaters, reefs, cultural programming, and educational programming.

Another project, the Hunts Point Lifelines, was awarded \$20 million for a feasibility study and pilot project for flood protection, green infrastructure, community and economic development, and maritime supply chains. We continue to work closely with HUD to implement these innovative designs.

Resiliency and Restoration Funding Opportunity

NYC Parks actively pursued funding through a \$100 million grant opportunity from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the U.S. Department of the Interior. As of Monday, June 16, 2014, we learned that five of our projects were funded. We are receiving \$990,000 for the Brighton Beach Green Infrastructure Pilot Project, \$250,000 for Daylighting of Tibbett's Brook in the Bronx, \$4.27 million for Spring Creek Salt Marsh and Coastal Upland Restoration, \$4.85 million for the restoration of Sunset Cove, and \$4.4 million for shoreline restoration on the Bronx River at Starlight Park.

FEMA

We have also worked closely with FEMA to obtain funding to rebuild our facilities better and stronger in the aftermath of the storm. To date Parks has 20 FEMA Project Worksheets obligated; representing \$72.5 million in reimbursable funds. Of the \$72.5 million in obligated funds, we received \$33.5 million in reimbursements. All of the reimbursed funds to date have been for expense items. The additional \$40.2 million in obligated funds comprises \$20.8 million in capital funding and \$19.4 million in expense funding.

Sustaining & Restoring Ecologies

Parks is dedicated to advancing resiliency by building and supporting communities and sustaining and restoring ecologies. Our natural resources, including wetlands, grasslands, forests and green infrastructure, play a critical role in storm protection. When restored properly, wetlands withstand large storms like Sandy, absorbing storm water and providing precious habitat for various types of species. A prime example of this is the wetland restoration project at Gerristen Creek, Brooklyn, which was completed prior to Superstorm Sandy and weathered the storm with relatively little damage. We are working to expand green infrastructure throughout the city to reduce flooding from rain and complement the stormwater filtration and absorption benefits provided by our wetlands. These ecosystems are also sources of biodiversity that help ensure continued ecosystem function and services.

Research, and Analytics

Research and data gathering are critical pieces of our resilience, recovery, and preparedness strategy. In partnership with the Natural Areas Conservancy, we are currently conducting a citywide ecological and social assessment to measure the health of our forests, wetlands, and grasslands. This assessment helps us understand how these areas function ecologically and benefit our diverse communities. Parks also continues to actively monitor and research the impacts of Superstorm Sandy on our communities and natural resources, in order to better prepare for future events.

As part of our ecological assessment we have partnered with the City University of New York (CUNY) to form the Jamaica Bay Science and Resilience Institute. The Institute is run by a consortium overseen by CUNY. The focus is on ecological and social assessments and indicators, modeling of the Bay, as well as decision-making and support tools. Part of the consortium is the Public Agency Council which comprises City, State, and Federal agencies who are stakeholders of the Jamaica Bay Area. The Public Agency Council has met several times to analyze the projects that NYC Parks is requesting the Army Corps prioritize.

Late Leaf-Out

To analyze the affect of the salt water inundation, in summer 2013 NYC Parks performed an extensive survey in the Superstorm Sandy inundation zone. One of the measures we used to ascertain tree damage was to examine the percentage of a tree's canopy that developed leaves. This is referred to as the tree's "leaf out."

NYC Parks analyzed and mapped trees in the inundation zone that were insufficiently leafed out a year after Sandy. Combined with information on routine tree removals, Parks visualized and identified areas where there was need for additional tree removal, continued monitoring, and new plantings. The survey identified a total 10,192 street and park trees showing stress and reduced leaf out; 6,864 of those trees were street trees, which is nearly 14% of the street trees within the inundation zone.

Conclusion

Superstorm Sandy marks an arduous time in the history of New York City, especially our Parks. NYC Parks has been fully committed to not only the full restoration of our parks system but also ensuring our parks are better for generations to come.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. I am glad to answer any questions that you may have.



New York City Council Committees on Parks & Recreation and Recovery & Resiliency

Oversight - Update on the Status of Parks and Beaches Affected by Hurricane Sandy Bill Introduction: Removal of trees downed as a result of a severe weather event June 19, 2014

Testimony of New Yorkers for Parks

Good afternoon. I'm James Yolles, Communications Director at New Yorkers for Parks.

This summer, New Yorkers for Parks is conducting a comprehensive post-Sandy assessment of the city's eight municipal swimming beaches, including boardwalks, for our next Report Card on Beaches. Because that work is ongoing, our comments today will largely concern other elements of citywide storm recovery.

But first a note on our upcoming report: few Parks Department properties sustained as much damage as the city's eight public swimming beaches. NY4P published Report Cards on these properties in 2007, 2009 and 2011. While the maintenance conditions dramatically improved over that time, these spaces require a fresh assessment post-Sandy. Our new report will be two-fold: it will score maintenance conditions at every beach, and it will assess how the Parks Department is handling the recovery at each beach from a management perspective. We are hopeful that the report will provide the Parks Department with a helpful independent assessment of its post-Sandy beach recovery work, and look forward to sharing the findings of the report with both committees here today.

Hurricane Sandy highlighted the Parks Department's role as a provider of essential city services. In the days after Sandy, with the entire park system closed to the public, the Department undertook the immense task of inspecting nearly 2,000 park properties. The damage to parks was extensive: there were approximately 20,000 downed trees in parks across the city. In parks, equipment was damaged, including essential infrastructure like electrical wires and plumbing lines. By the following weekend, however, the Department had cleared enough debris to provide limited access to most parks.

As increasingly volatile weather becomes the norm, it's critical that the Council and Administration work to ensure that the Department is staffed and funded accordingly.

First, for tree care:

Even though the Parks Department has, thanks to recent budget restorations, shortened its pruning cycle for street trees to a nine-year cycle, we were dismayed to learn at the Council's February 25 hearing on tree care that the Department does not have the budget to prune trees in parks with the same frequency. We hope the Council and Parks Department can work together on a plan to start getting trees in parks closer to the recommended seven-year cycle.

Second, for Capital Division staffing:

Following Hurricane Sandy, the Parks Department was forced to sideline numerous capital projects, as Capital Division staff turned its attention to Sandy recovery project planning and oversight. This backlog remains today, and takes a citywide toll on an already slow capital construction process. One small step that would contribute to faster capital project timelines would be to increase the Capital Division staff. Adding \$4 million to the FY15 budget for parks would create 55 more full-time positions in the capital division. This expansion would allow the Department to clear its backlog of Sandy-related projects and allow the City to move forward more quickly with plans to address capital needs in neighborhood parks across the city. We're encouraged that Chair Levine and his colleagues are supporting this \$4 million request as part of the Council's overall budget request package.

Thank you very much.

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For over 100 years, New Yorkers for Parks has built, protected and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. More information: www.ny4p.org

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL



Committee on Parks and Recreation Testimony in Support of Preconsidered Intro. T2014-1360 June 19, 2014

Good afternoon Chairman Levine and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation. My name is Joseph Rosenberg. I am the Executive Director of the Catholic Community Relations Council ("CCRC") of New York and I am pleased to be before you to indicate the strong support of the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn for the street co-naming in memory of Father Damien.

The CCRC was established in 2008 to identify and implement public policy objectives of the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn by engaging the Mayor's office, City agencies, the City Council and Community Boards in their policy and decision making processes.

I am before you today in support of the street co-naming of 33rd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues in honor of Joseph De Veuster, also known as Father Damien, a native of Flanders, who was canonized in 2009 due to his remarkable and benevolent ministerial work done on behalf of the leper colony of Molokai in Hawaii. He tended to those suffering from leprosy (now known as Hansen's disease) in Hawaii for many years before ultimately succumbing to the disease himself. He lived by his own example of selflessness and devotion to the sick even at the expense of his own health and ultimately his own life. He not only provided spiritual support to this population that was shunned and feared by the rest of the world, but built homes, chapels, hospital and clinics to house and heal those suffering from this disease.

This location of 33rd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues is appropriate for honoring the legacy of Father Damien. Close by is Bellevue Hospital, the sole treatment center for those suffering from Hansen's disease in the Mid Atlantic region and, in effect, continuing the legacy of Father Damien through the treatment and physical and emotional care of patients suffering from this affliction. Furthermore, 33rd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues is also the location of the Chapel of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a Chapel that serves as a place of spiritual guidance, meditation and prayer for many people in this community, including Bellevue Hospital, NYU Medical Center and the Veterans' Affairs Hospital. The Chapel is also particularly noteworthy in that it is where Cardinal Egan resides and has celebrated mass since his retirement as the Archbishop of New York. If this street co-naming is approved, the Archdiocese will commemorate this event with the installation of a plaque in front of the Chapel honoring Father Damien.

Upon the canonization of the Father by Pope Benedict XVI, President Obama applauded the work of Father Damien. On October 9, 2009, the President noted that "Father Damien challenged the stigmatizing effects of disease, giving voice to the voiceless and ultimately sacrificing his own life to bring dignity to so many. In our own time as millions around the world suffer from disease, especially the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, we should draw on the examples of FR. Damien's resolve in answering the urgent call to heal and care for the sick."

This street co-naming is an international effort. It not only has the support of Cardinal Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York and Bishop DiMarzio of the Diocese of Brooklyn, but also of the Government of Flanders where Father Damien was born and is considered a national hero. We are also especially gratified to have the support of Council Member Rosie Mendez and Community Board 6 in seeking this street co-naming. We hope to have your support as well.

Thank you for permitting me to testify and for your consideration.



FOR THE RECORD

City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation Street Co-naming in Honor of Father Damien Testimony by Kris Dierckx, June 19, 2014

Good afternoon members of the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation,

I am the Diplomatic Representative of the Government of Flanders, Belgium to the United States. First of all, I would like to thank you for opportunity to share with you a bit more information about Flanders House New York and the important figure of Father Damien, whose name and fame should ring familiar to all who attended catholic school in the U.S.

Flanders House New York is the diplomatic representation to the U.S. of the Government of Flanders, a regional government of the federal country of Belgium that enjoys full diplomatic and treaty making powers, which is quite unique in the world. Next to being a diplomatic representation, my office is also a source of information on Flemish cultural, educational, and scientific activities and exchanges in New York and the rest of the United States. We are located on the 44th floor of *The New York Times Building* in Midtown Manhattan and aim to be a bridge between Flanders and the U.S.

The importance of the figure of Father Damien to my Government and the Flemish people cannot be understated. Damien is considered to be one of the most important Belgians who ever lived. In 2008, he was awarded the title of "The Greatest Belgian Ever" by the Flemish public broadcasting service. In 2009, he was canonized by the Vatican. After noticing co-naming examples such as U2 Way, Cartier Place, and Bob Marley Boulevard in New York City, we first conceived the idea of co-naming a New York City street in memory of this historical figure that meant so much for the American people.

Our research taught us that an ideal candidate shall (1) have made a permanent, continuing and significant positive contribution to the greater good of the community; or (2) have been a continuing contributor to the cultural, economic, educational, intellectual, political or scientific vitality of the community; or (3) shall have made an extraordinary contribution in the service of

humanity. We are convinced that Father Damien not only meets one of these criteria but all three of them. As some of you may know, or have read in the file we submitted to this community board, he was a man who had cared for sixteen years for the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of hundreds of people with Hansen's Disease — also known as leprosy - in Hawai'i before he himself ultimately contracted the disease and later succumbed to it. Father Damien was a priest and a leader but also a community planner and visionary who understood human need and the true meaning of ministry. His legacy is a testimony to his vigorous advocating for the universal right to a compassionate health care. Damien's humanity, determination, and self-sacrifice are truly an inspiration for all mankind; he is an example to follow, and represents the best in all of us.

Apparently another criterium for street co-naming this city is to have had a significant affiliation with the proposed location. The co-naming location that the Government of Flanders, together with the Archdiocese of New York are proposing today, namely 33rd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues in New York City, is situated in the direct vicinity of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Hansen's Disease Center at Bellevue Hospital, which provides testing and treatment of Hansen's Disease to New York City residents. To us this is the ideal location to co-name a street in honor of a man who gave his life for those who suffered this terrible disease and were considered outcasts of society. Furthermore, the location of the co-naming would also be in close proximity to the Chapel of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; a chapel which shares the same name as Father Damien's religious order. Moreover, this chapel serves as a place of meditation for the surrounding medical facilities and is home to Cardinal Egan since his retirement.

We thought that this great city, which is possibly the most globalized city in the world, with all of its cultural richness and diversity, and also home to the United Nations, would be the ideal place to commemorate Father Damien's legacy of compassion for the outcasts and the sick of our society. We sincerely hope you will view our request favorably and I wholeheartedly thank you for giving me the opportunity of addressing the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation this afternoon.



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FOR THE RECORD

Statement of Ya-Ting Liu
Director, NYC Sustainability Program
New York League of Conservation Voters

City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation City Council Committee on Recovery and Resiliency June 19, 2014

Good afternoon. My name is Ya-Ting Liu, and I am Director of the New York City Sustainability Program at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 25,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient.

NYLCV would like to thank Chair Treyger, Chair Levine and members of the respective committees for holding this hearing on the role of parks in our city's resiliency in the face of a changing climate. In the 2014 PlaNYC Progress Report, we are pleased to see a focus on restoring natural areas and increasing green infrastructure as a strategy to increasing our city's resiliency. Healthy parks and green landscapes provide a range of quantifiable ecosystem services including carbon storage, shading, evaporative cooling, air quality improvement, and stormwater management.

The city's park system not only continues to provide recreation and open space but serves to protect and buffer communities from the impacts of severe weather events which have become the new normal. As such, it is imperative that members of the City Council and Mayor de Blasio adequately fund and staff the Parks Department to address the backlog of Sandy-related projects, address the capital needs of parks across the city and provide ongoing maintenance to keep our parks clean and vibrant all year round.

It is also critical that the Parks Department maximize the value of these investments by creating high performance landscapes – landscapes that can perform many functions at once. Because 14% of the land in New York City is parkland, the environmental impact of even incremental changes in park construction materials and techniques will be enormous. A few years ago, the Design Trust for Public Space and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) produced the first-of-its-kind comprehensive guidelines for sustainable, 21st century parks that detail standards for how New York City's green spaces are designed, constructed and maintained. It's a sustainability and resiliency manual of best practices that should be formally adopted and implemented. The report titled "High Performance Landscape Guidelines" is an impressive body of work and available on

Parks Department's website, but it is unclear how the Parks Department is using these guidelines in its daily planning, construction and maintenance operations.

NYLCV applauds the work of Chair Levine during the budget hearings for bringing much-needed attention on the funding challenges that plague our city's parks. We are committed to working with our advocacy partners, members of the City Council and the administration to close the funding gap and bring quality parks to every neighborhood in the five boroughs.

Friends of Rockaway Beach 516-509-8957 seathenight@aol.com

- 1. Why did NYC Parks only request 4.7 million dollars from FEMA as reimbursement for over 50 million dollars, worth of damage along Shore Front Pkwy in Rockaway beach? The Area in question is a 1 mile stretch of playground alongside the Rockaway beach boardwalk 10 block are in the neighborhood of Rockaway beach and 10 blocks are in the neighborhood of Rockaway Park. Hurricane Sandy totally destroyed all the parks play grounds, skate park, sitting areas, basketball courts, volleyball courts, hockey rink, shuffle board courts, 28 handball courts. The areas in question are NOT included in the rebuilding of the Rockaway Beach boardwalk.
- 2. Why were 2 million dollar lifeguard shacks shoved down the collective throats of the people of the Rockaways? Community board 14 Queens, unanimously vote against there installation, especially when they replaced lifeguard trailers which could not have been valued at more than 1hundred thousand dollars per unit.
- 3. Parks has had numerous "listening sessions" to include the people of Rockaways wishes. Yet little to none of the people wishes have been incorporated into the final design of our new

boardwalk specifically to have winterized comfort stations for our seniors and small children to use in the non summer months. Another major request to incorporate into Our new boardwalk is SHADE STRUTURES! Yet for some reason it is not included.

Most recently Parks designers have added tanning beds and Chaise lounges to the boardwalk design,. NOBODY from the community ever requested this. In fact Community Board 14 Queens again is on record opposing there installation as we are afraid they may become projectiles during the next storm.

40 Brighton 1st Road Brooklyn, NY 11235 July 15, 2013

Design Commission 253 Broadway, Fifth Floor New York, NY 10007

RE: 24804: Reconstruction of the Riegelmann Boardwalk, Phase II, Brighton 15th Street to

Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn. (Final) (CC 47, CB 13) DPR

Dear Commissioners:

There are serious, life threatening, public safety issues regarding the use of concrete slab construction, which have not been addressed. I urge you to reject this design until appropriate studies have been done to ensure that concrete slab construction will not increase storm surge damage.

On October 3, 2011, almost one year before Hurricane Sandy devastated New York City, I submitted comments to you (attached) containing over one hundred and fifty years of Army Corps of Engineers storm surge data for the project area. My comments also explained how concrete slab construction could exacerbate storm surge damage in and around the project area. In several previous discussions with the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding storm surge damage to the project area, they had the hubris to insist that a storm surge would NEVER hit the Boardwalk. Sadly, they were 100% incorrect in this assumption.

Hurricane Sandy did indeed hit the Boardwalk, with a breach at Ocean Parkway – exactly where there was a concrete slab pilot project section. Flood waters spread down Ocean Parkway for 1.5 miles. The breach and flooding are documented in the recently released PlaNYC report "A Stronger More Resilient New York".

There were dramatic differences in storm surge impacts upon and adjacent to the concrete slabs as compared to the wooden boards on either side of this section (photos are attached). These included several feet of erosion under the concrete slabs with no erosion under the wooden sections and several feet of sand pushed onto streets adjacent to the concrete slab as compared to mere inches adjacent to the wooden sections. There is evidence that indicates that the wooden slats attenuated wave energy while wave energy did not decrease on the concrete section and may even have increased. The differences are so dramatic that they cannot be ignored. Something very, very different happened where the storm surge hit the concrete slab section, including the degree of damage to adjacent properties.

The push for concrete boardwalks has been spearheaded by Mayor Bloomberg, who on the basis of a cursory inspection of damage in Rockaway, declared the end of wooden boardwalks. What the Mayor did not know at that time was that where there were groin fields on the beach, both concrete AND wooden boardwalks survived fairly intact, while in areas that lacked groins, BOTH concrete and wooden sections were obliterated. In addition, the wooden sections had not been properly secured to their underlying support structure, which exacerbated damage. Therefore, not only was the Mayor's

proclamation not based upon any engineering expertise, but significant information about underlying conditions was not available at that moment.

Furthermore, in Rockaway, there is undeveloped land or parkland adjacent to the concrete sections. In Brooklyn, the boardwalk directly abuts dense residential and commercial development. Therefore, impacts from faulty design will have far more serious implications.

Hurricane Sandy showed that concrete slab boardwalk construction has the potential to significantly increase storm surge damage. The new section that you are reviewing is in front of several high rise buildings, where thousands of people reside. Their safety should be paramount. I urge you to reject this plan until such time that detailed engineering and environmental impact studies are done. Please note that in March of 2013, Community Board 13 sent a letter (attached) to Brooklyn Parks Commissioner Kevin Jeffrey requesting such studies.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Ida Sanoff



BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 13

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EDDIE MARK
Chairman

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March 7, 2013

Kevin Jeffrey
Brooklyn Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
Litchfield Villa, Prospect Park
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Dear Commissioner Jeffrey:

At its General Board Meeting, on Feb. 26, 2013, the members approved the following motion with a vote of 22 in favor; none opposed; and two abstentions:

As a result of Hurricane Sandy's devastation and the potential for further weather changes that can cause damage to C.B. 13's iconic shoreline, C.B. 13 supports the sending of this letter asking that an EIS and/or engineering study be performed before any and all work is done on the beach and boardwalk, save for emergency repairs, and that a moratorium be placed on such work until a proper EIS explores all aspects of such development.

Yours truly

Chuck Reichenthal District Manager

Cc: Borough President Marty Markowitz; Councilmember Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.; Councilmember Michael Nelson; Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny; State Senator Diane Savino.

40 Brighton 1st Road Apt. 7A Brooklyn, NY 11235 October 3, 2011

Public Design Commission of the City of New York 253 Broadway, Fifth Floor New York, NY 10007

RE:

24273: Reconstruction of the Riegelmann Boardwalk, Phase II, Brighton Beach, Brighton 15th Street to Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn. (Preliminary) (CC 47, CB 13) DPR

24274: Reconstruction of an entrance to the Riegelmann Boardwalk, Brighton Beach, Brighton Second Street, Brooklyn. (Preliminary) (CC 47, CB 13) DPR/DOT 24275: Reconstruction of an entrance to the Riegelmann Boardwalk, Coney Island Beach, West 33rd Street, Brooklyn. (Preliminary) (CC 47, CB 13) DPR/DOT

Dear Commissioners:

I urge you to <u>reject</u> the current proposal to use concrete slab construction on the famed Reigelman Boardwalk. Although the project before you is for the replacement of only a section of the Boardwalk, it will be the prototype for future reconstructions. The design proposes solid concrete slabs that will be covered in part with plastic slats. I am very concerned because the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has not done <u>any</u> environmental or engineering studies. Furthermore, they have done nothing to rule out the possibility of increased property damage resulting from the action of storm surge waves hitting a concrete Boardwalk.

The ability of concrete to <u>concentrate</u> wave energy is well known. Concrete seawalls and breakwaters were sometimes constructed in the ocean, at a considerable distance from beaches, <u>to concentrate wave energy</u> before it could hit and erode the beach. However, this frequently resulted in the destruction of the beach that it was supposed to protect. In his book, *The Corps and the Shore*, Dr. Orrin H. Pilkey, Director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, Department of Geology, Duke University, details the problems associated with concrete shoreline structures.

The existing Boardwalk is constructed of porous wood slats with spaces between the planks. This soft, slatted surface aids in the dissipation of wave energy. An impermeable, concrete slab Boardwalk will also result in more storm water runoff and increased flooding on local streets. However, there is an alternative to concrete slab construction: The use of treated, non-rainforest wood or imitation wood planks, placed on spaced, vertical supports, not solid slabs. In fact, the existing Boardwalk is built on these spaced, vertical supports and with some occasional repairs, it has survived all of the storms of the past eighty eight years!

Approximately three miles in length, the Boardwalk runs through both the Brighton Beach and Coney Island communities. It is bordered on its northern side by numerous multi story residential buildings, high rise residential buildings and commercial properties. The risk of storm damage to the Brighton Beach and Coney Island communities is well documented, most recently in August 2011. In advance of Hurricane Irene, the City of New York took the unprecedented step of mandating the evacuation of these communities. Coney Island Hospital, located approximately one mile inland from the Boardwalk, was evacuated as well. Hurricane Irene actually made landfall at Coney Island, though luckily, it had been downgraded to a tropical storm. At the time, the news media reported that in the coming years, the New York City area would be hit more frequently by major storms.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers Atlantic Coast of New York City – Rockaway Inlet to Norton Point, Coney Island Area Shore Protection Project, Final General Design Memorandum of 1991, lists some of the major storms and storm surges in Coney Island: 1815 – storm surge of 8.0 feet; 1821 – storm surge of 9.0 feet; 1897 – Northeaster, resulted in undermined buildings and washed out roadways in Coney Island; 1901 – storm surge of 6.0 feet; 1920 – Northeaster, storm surge of 5.3 feet caused extensive damage in Coney Island; 1950 – Northeaster, storm surge of 7.5 feet; 1960 – Hurricane Donna (storm of record, 27 year event) storm surge of 8.6 feet; 1962 – Northeaster, storm surge of 7.5 feet. In the Northeaster of 1992, sea water came a mile inland, almost up to the Belt (Shore) Parkway. However, other than Steeplechase Pier, which had previously noted structural problems, the buildings adjacent to the Boardwalk sustained little if any structural damage.

In 1994, to remediate the erosion caused by the Northeaster of 1992, a beach replenishment project commenced to increase the width of Brighton Beach and Coney Island Beach. But that sand is fast eroding, increasing the probability that the waves of future storms will actually hit the Boardwalk. The DPR has not shown that a concrete slab Boardwalk adjacent to buildings is safe. It has not demonstrated that the concrete slabs will not increase wave energy, causing increased property damage and beach erosion. Replenishing a beach is always an option, but it is a difficult, time consuming choice. Replenishment does not occur until after there has been extensive storm damage. It is detrimental to both benthic and pelagic marine biota. And it is costly! It requires a federal sponsor, usually a Member of Congress, as well as a local sponsor. Plus it is not a simple or foolproof process. The beach replenishment project of 1994 resulted in the inadvertent burial of every restroom under the Boardwalk. They had to be replaced with new structures constructed on top of the Boardwalk, a multiyear, multimillion dollar project. There were other consequences of the beach replenishment project, which remain unaddressed because of lack of funding. It is far better to prevent storm damage rather than to repair it.

The DPR has claimed that it has successfully used concrete to replace a portion of Rockaway's Boardwalk. But in contrast to the solid wall of buildings adjacent to the Reigelman Boardwalk, the concrete areas in Rockaway are adjacent to few, if any buildings. DPR has also pointed to the concrete walkway bordering Brooklyn's Manhattan Beach as a fine example of the practicality of concrete. However, in Manhattan Beach, the concrete is adjacent to open parkland. There are no residential or commercial structures near the concrete.

There is already a local example of why a shoreline concrete walkway is not a good idea. Decades ago, a concrete walkway was built between Brighton Beach and Manhattan Beach. Known as the Manhattan Beach Esplanade, this walkway was ripped to shreds during a hurricane in the early 1960's. But adjacent to the concrete were the spacious, porous, grassy yards of a few private homes, not the large walls of apartment buildings.

There are other reasons why a concrete walkway is a poor choice for the historic Coney Island Boardwalk. Esthetically, the new, concrete portion located between Ocean Parkway and Brighton 1st Road is already problematic. Installed just a year ago, it is already riddled with cracks. The pale surface is stained with various substances and marred with blackened clumps of discarded chewing gum. Its granular surface, which is supposed to make it less slippery, creates a vibrating "shake, rattle and roll" effect on the users of strollers, wheelchairs and walkers. The random, slanting pattern imprinted on the slabs has many residents complaining of vertigo. Its unyielding surface makes a difference to walkers and runners. As soon as you move from the wood to the concrete you feel the greater impacts on your joints. People are already complaining about heat emanating from the concrete on sunny days. A substantial number of senior citizens depend on this Boardwalk daily. One wonders if local residents who open their windows to the cool breeze coming off the Boardwalk, will now be forced to increase the use of their air conditioners and pay higher electricity bills.

DPR is essentially asking us to "trust them" that this project will not increase the probability of property damage. But major problems associated with recent DPR designed projects do not exactly inspire confidence. In the spring of 2010, the new Brooklyn Bridge Park was opened. It included a new playground with several expensive, shiny metal domes. The domes were designed by a famous landscape architect. They were designed for children to play on, but no one took the time to see if they were safe. They were so smooth, that children slipped right off of them. One child slipped and slammed her face so hard into the dome that she broke her nose and lost a tooth. The domes became so hot in the sun, that children suffered second degree burns if they just brushed against them (New York Daily News, April 8th 2010). Ultimately, the domes had to be removed. Artificial turf fields have raised a number of public health and safety concerns, including excessive heat and exposure to toxic chemicals. For instance, a DPR constructed, artificial turf soccer field with a crumb rubber base, at Thomas Jefferson Park in East Harlem was found to contain five times more lead than the Environmental Protection Agency allows in playground soil (New York Daily News, February 9, 2009). Activists had warned that crumb rubber fields were problematic, but of course, no one listened. It cost several hundred thousand dollars to replace the field. Ultimately, DPR has decided not to use crumb rubber fields anymore. DPR did not take the time to conduct a single test to investigate whether these (and other) projects were safe. Yet now they expect thousands of Brighton Beach and Coney Island residents to just sit back and accept their decision that a concrete slab Boardwalk will not exacerbate damage to our homes.

Yes, some areas of the Boardwalk are worn and need to be repaired. But DPR refuses to acknowledge WHY the damage is occurring. The City of New York refuses to allocate proper maintenance funds to properly maintain the Boardwalk. People have been complaining vociferously about vehicular damage for years. The Boardwalk is a footpath, it was not constructed to be a highway for heavy vehicles. Yet that it is how it is being used. The SUV's and trucks of DPR vehicles and contractors' vehicles use the Boardwalk as a highway and parking lot. New York City Police Department (NYPD) vehicles use it as a highway too. Some time ago, a few lighter vehicles such as scooters and Gators were purchased for NYPD to use on the Boardwalk. But no one has provided further funding for additional vehicles. NYPD has said that it needs vehicular access to the Boardwalk for emergencies. But in the summer, when the Boardwalk is packed, NYPD vehicles cannot traverse the Boardwalk and they have no problem zooming down the sand at thirty miles an hour. In addition, NYPD actually uses Gator type vehicles to patrol the sand. Just for the heck of it, I went to the John Deere website. A brand new, full featured "Gator" costs about \$10,000. It will cost several million dollars to reconstruct only a small portion of the Boardwalk. A million dollars would purchase one hundred Gator type vehicles. If heavy vehicles were excluded from the Boardwalk, repairs would be less frequent and less costly. Imagine the savings to taxpayers!

The continued focus on concrete slab construction, without thorough study of the impacts, is irresponsible and dangerous. Reasonable alternatives do exist. However, DPR has been reluctant to explore these alternatives. Instead, they want to use concrete for one reason only: It's CHEAP. But the people who are proposing concrete slab construction do not live here. I am one of the tens of thousands of people who live in a building that abuts the Boardwalk. My building and the other buildings on the Boardwalk have survived many storm surges and hurricanes. But we do not know if that will continue, once our buildings lose the attenuating action of a soft surfaced Boardwalk, with exposed space between the slats. I implore the Design Commission to reject this proposal.

Sincerely

Ida Saroff

Ida Sanoff

A few years ago, a section of the wooden Boardwalk (between Ocean Parkway & Brighton 1st Road) was replaced with concrete slabs, as a pilot project.

Despite submission of 150 years of Army Corps of Engineers storm surge data, the Parks Department told us that "a storm surge will never hit this Boardwalk".

Our concerns about safety issues were ignored. Our concerns about increased storm surge damage were ignored. Our calls for an Environmental Impact Statement were ignored. The Parks Department told the community that if they were so concerned, they should hire their own experts to do the studies, knowing that we could not afford to do so.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED....

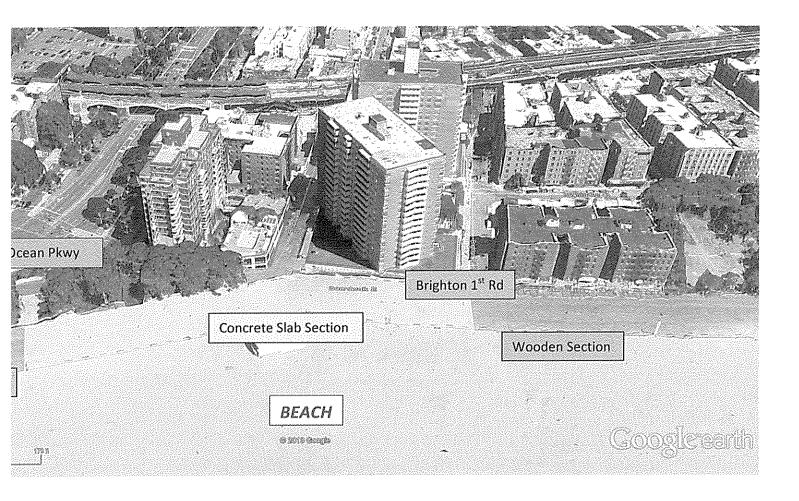
These photos were taken on 11/4/12, a few days after Hurricane Sandy.

There was a significant difference in storm surge impacts adjacent to and upon concrete slab Boardwalk sections as compared to traditional wooden sections:

- 1) NYC's recently released Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency Report states that "At Ocean Parkway...waves pushed thousands of tons of sand northward, with water traveling 1.5 miles north, to Avenue W".
- 2) There was erosion under the concrete sections but no erosion under the wood.
- 3) Sand was piled up by the storm surge to the level of the wooden boards and several inches of sand accumulated on top of the boards. This indicates that the speed of the storm surge wave slowed down and suspended sand settled out. This may have occurred because the porous, slatted, wooden surface and/or the grain of the wood created friction.
- 4) On the street adjacent to the wooden section, there was minimal sand accumulation, just inches.
- 5) No sand settled out on top of the concrete slabs, but there was significant deposition of sand, several feet deep, on adjacent streets & roadways. This indicates that the storm surge wave did not slow down when it went over the concrete slab. Since it is well known that concrete can concentrate wave energy, the force of the wave may even have increased.
- 6) What is also interesting is the degree of flooding in buildings adjacent to the concrete as opposed to buildings adjacent to wood. In 3101 Ocean Pkwy, the flood waters were 15 feet high. The entire first floor had to be gutted. 40 Brighton 1st Road is directly behind that building. At the end of the block is wooden section. This building only had 6 feet of water.

Brighton Beach/Coney Island Boardwalk Between Ocean Parkway and Brighton 1st Road

Concrete Slab Section installed between two older, wooden sections





Boardwalk at Brighton Beach, approx. two blocks east of Ocean Parkway, looking east

The arrow indicates where the new concrete slab section ends & the traditional wooden section begins. There is significant erosion under the concrete slab section, which then tapers off over a few feet (Note that there is a short staircase at the beginning of the wooden section) as you get closer to the wooden section. There is no erosion under the wooden section & the sand is piled up flush to the to the top of the boards.



The same concrete slab section looking towards the west.

At the right margin of the photo there is a shade pavilion that extends out over the sand & the concrete Boardwalk is behind it. There is significant erosion under the concrete slab section.



A close up of the western end of the same section shown in the previous photo.

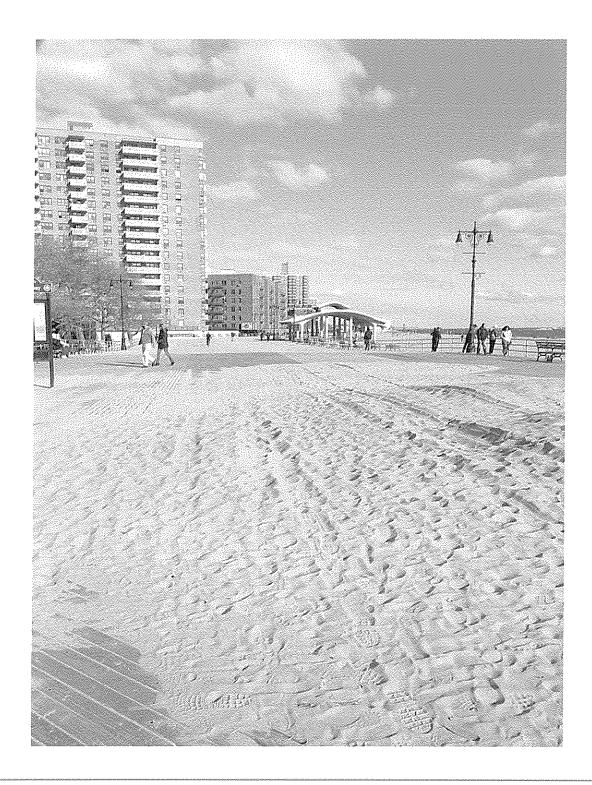
The arrow indicates where the concrete slab ends. The erosion stops abruptly as soon as the wooden section begins.



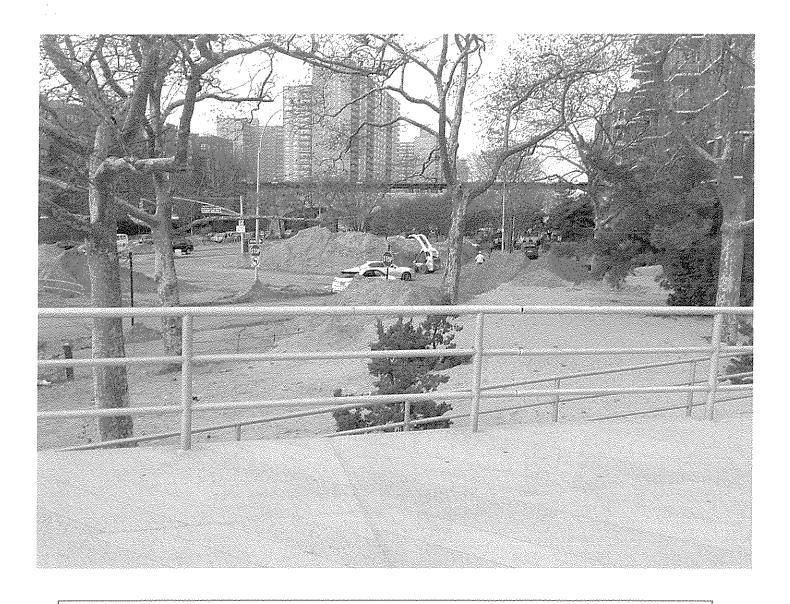
The line of demarcation is even more dramatic up close. The eroded area varied from 1-3 feet in height for the entire length of the concrete slab section, about three blocks.



The impacts on top of the Boardwalk were even more dramatic. Here is the same concrete slab section, just west of Ocean Pkwy. The view is looking east, towards the shade pavilion. Notice that there is NO SAND on top of the concrete slab section.



Same view as before, but standing a little further west. The lighter colored concrete slab portion is in the background near the shade pavilion - remember that there was not a drop of sand on top of the concrete slabs. Yet just a few feet away, there are several inches of sand on top of the traditional wooden section.



Ocean Pkwy. So what happened to the sand that eroded out from under the concrete portion? It ended up in piles several feet high on the street & sidewalk. Some of the sand has been shoveled off the roadway. Look how much there is - take a look at the size of the piles. Notice the apartment building at the extreme right.





This is the garage at the rear of the building in the previous photo. The cars on the first level are almost completely covered in sand. The sand reaches almost all of the way down the alleyway. This block is Beach Walk, a mapped pedestrian path.



This view looks north on Beach Walk, near its intersection with Brighton Beach Ave. You can see how deep the sand is and how it extends all the way down the block.

THIS IS A PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUE!!!! CONCRETE SLAB CONSTRUCTION SHOULD NOT BE USED UNTIL IT CAN BE DETERMINED THAT IT WILL NOT EXACERBATE STORM SURGE DAMAGE.

In today of our triend Dosnage I would like to request that delency street be renamed Dosnage Santana street. The street should not only be renamed but fixed. The crossing lights go away to quickly even as it counts down to you could have to possible to slow down the count down of an extra 3 seconds. Also widen and lengthen the curb to prevent another children from being hurt and any families from feeling injustice.

Sincerely, Akeitah Arthur

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- Jeffried Santuna.

Dear, City council
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(Cleste Ranko

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Dear City, Council

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THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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