



A LETTER FROM THE PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY FUND & DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Dear NYCHA Residents and Prospective Partners,

We are thrilled to introduce this new reference guide, created to help us all work together to improve and enhance open spaces across New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses. This guide represents the collaborative efforts of the Public Housing Community Fund, the Design Trust for Public Space, NYCHA, partners, and residents. Collectively, we work to transform our city's open spaces into vibrant, inclusive, and resilient hubs that strengthen communities and empower residents.

Open spaces are at the heart of NYCHA communities, offering places for recreation, relaxation, and connection. While these spaces already play an important role in daily life, we recognize that many have untapped potential to become even more active and engaging through thoughtful design and investment. This guide outlines a clear path to make that vision a reality, providing five key steps for residents and their partners to follow:

IMAGINE: Imagining possibilities for open spaces at NYCHA

PARTNER: Partnering with residents, organizations, and funders who can make these visions a reality

DESIGN: Designing projects with residents and partners

BUILD: Building the future of NYCHA's open spaces through on-site renovations and transformations

ACTIVATE: Activating and maintaining the newly transformed open spaces so they can remain fun for all

We encourage all NYCHA residents and prospective project partners to use this guide as a resource and a call to action to commit to the improvement of NYCHA open spaces. Together, we can make NYCHA a wonderful place to live and play, now and for future generations.

Sincerely,

Alex Zablocki
Executive Director
Public Housing Community Fund

Matthew Clarke
Executive Director
Design Trust for Public Space

FROM **IMAGINE** TO **ACTIVATE** A QUICK GUIDE FOR **IMPROVING** NYCHA OPEN SPACE



In partnership with
**DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE**

**PUBLIC HOUSING
COMMUNITY FUND**

How to use this guide

Building from the principles outlined in NYCHA's Connected Communities Guidelines and the Open Space Master Plan, this guide is designed to help support the visions of NYCHA residents for the future of the campuses where they live and play. By supporting partnerships with community groups, designers, and funders, we can increase the work currently underway on NYCHA's campuses. This guide is organized into the following five steps:



IMAGINE

To encourage new projects, this first step instructs how residents and partners can develop ideas for transforming NYCHA's open spaces. While creating project visions, we encourage residents and partners to contact the Public Housing Community Fund for assistance. This non-profit organization is dedicated to supporting NYCHA residents and will connect residents with NYCHA staff and resident leaders, as well as partners who can contribute their services to open space improvement projects. During this step, NYCHA staff will outline agency processes and requirements that apply to your project.



PARTNER

This section highlights the importance of connecting residents with partners who can help them realize their open space projects. Partners can provide a range of services, including funding, project management, design, construction, and activation and maintenance support. Once the partner(s) who will provide funding and project management are on-board, these teams will work with NYCHA to prepare the legal agreements required to begin design.



DESIGN

With an approved site access agreement from NYCHA, project teams can begin their design processes. This phase should include community workshops to ensure that common goals for the project are established. Additional partners with specific design experience can be invited to project teams to assist during this phase. Designs should be priced throughout this phase so that the project budget and scope are properly aligned.



BUILD

Once a design is complete and the project budget and scope are in agreement, the project can move into the build phase. To fully realize their projects, most teams will need to find additional partners who can support the work, such as muralists, landscapers, or contractors. This is an important time for project teams to ensure that the site is kept clean and safe, and that there is clear communication about the project schedule.



ACTIVATE

Throughout the guide, we encourage project teams to find ways to engage your neighbors and activate the site from the initial **IMAGINE** phase through the completion of the **BUILD** phase. With the physical upgrade now complete, the project site should be activated and maintained so that it can be as vital as originally envisioned for many years to come. In this section we encourage partners, original to the team or new, to support the repair, cleaning, and continued use of the space.

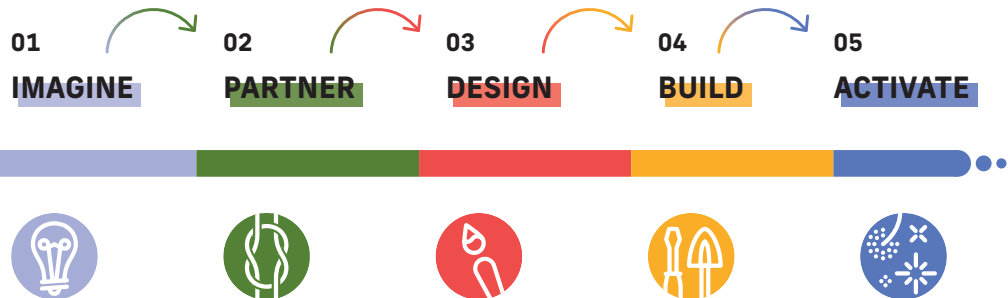
This guide aims to inspire and support teams to create incredible projects and we look forward to helping you realize your visions. While we want all projects to be a success, we cannot guarantee commitments for all proposals.

In addition to these five steps, the guide also highlights several case studies of successful open space improvement projects at NYCHA. These examples can inspire ideas for your own project!

WELCOME!

If you are a **resident** or **prospective partner** interested in transforming NYCHA, you are in the right place!

Create a vision for NYCHA's open spaces by following the **five steps** outlined in this guide:



→ NYCHA is special!

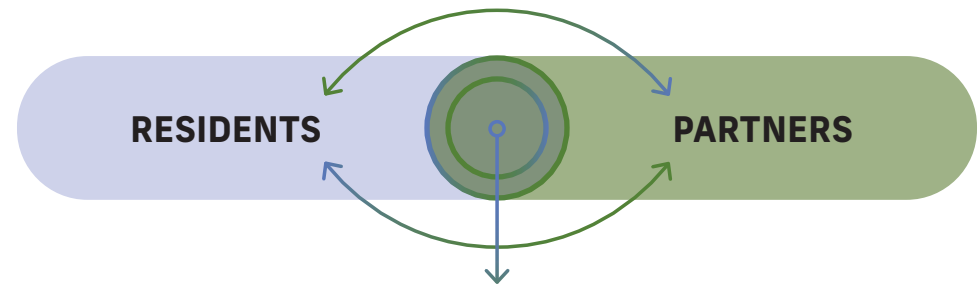
Unlike the rest of the city, NYCHA has lawns, trees, and play areas. There are more than 2,400 acres of open space across 335 campuses — more than 2,000 football fields! Many are ready for upgrade — it is no surprise: NYCHA is nearly 100 years old. **Did you know that most of this space is fenced off and underused?** You can change that!

Look through the entire guide before you begin. Each **step** highlights things you should consider and describes requirements. The **case studies** provide examples, the **web-based version** (www.communityfund.nyc/openspace) links to additional resources. We have even provided a **final checklist** summary at the end.

If you have any questions, contact the Public Housing Community Fund: openspace@communityfund.nyc. We would love to hear from you!

Who are YOU?

NYCHA **residents** and **partners** working together!



Who are WE?

The Public Housing Community Fund and the Design Trust for Public Space are two organizations working to support NYCHA communities. We have shown through our work that **residents** and their **partners** can make incredible transformations to open space at NYCHA. We are excited to see more projects like these expand across the city with **your** help!

By participating as a **resident** or **partner** you can:

- Improve the **HEALTH** of residents
- Support a more **RESILIENT** environment
- Have **FUN** at all ages
- Enjoy a livelier and **SAFER** campus
- Celebrate **COMMUNITY**

We hope you enjoy the transformational process of improving your open spaces alongside your neighbors and community partners!

These projects will require time and patience. Estimated timelines for each step are illustrated on the back of each card! Just like this:



IMAGINE



RESIDENTS, YOU KNOW WHAT THE OPEN SPACES IN YOUR COMMUNITY NEED. LOOK AROUND AND YOU WILL SEE MANY OPPORTUNITIES!

Imagine an updated ball court or playground, a new mural on an outdoor wall, a garden on a patch of lawn, or a new seating area for you and your neighbors set under shade trees!

Residents, these projects will not impact your rent.

No project is too SMALL or LARGE!

Be curious and ask:

How do you like to spend time outdoors?

How are the open spaces on your campus being used today?

What is missing or damaged? What can be improved?

IMAGINE CHECKLIST

For this first step, look around:

- Review the open space on your campus
- Consider nearby amenities like public parks or seating areas that already exist
- Brainstorm project ideas with your neighbors
- Contact the Public Housing Community Fund or go to the project website:
www.communityfund.nyc/openspace

Have an idea? Contact the Public Housing Community Fund by email or on our website. They will help you determine if there are other plans for this site AND they will match **residents** with **partners** who can help bring resources to projects! They will also connect you to NYCHA resident leaders and staff who will guide you through the agency's process and all requirements for obtaining approvals along the way.

Please consider that projects range in cost based on size, scope, and complexity. A mural will likely be quicker to create and less expensive than a large new garden or play area. Look at the case studies at the back of this deck for inspiration.

Check out the [Connected Communities Guidebook](#) and NYCHA's [Open Space Master Plan](#) for design ideas and principles. You might even see some ideas that have already been imagined for your actual campus!

Want to create a mural or host an event? For these two project types, you can use the [Safe Places, Active Spaces](#) mini toolkits in place of this document!



Are you interested in planting a garden at your development?

NYCHA's resident gardening application is available at your property management office and is also online. You can find the link on our website!

Partners: this is your chance to consider what sites and/or project types you are interested in. Imagine working with residents to bring their ideas to life by funding and designing spaces that foster connection and well-being for generations. We are excited to hear from you, too!

Plan on this step taking roughly 1–3 months

PARTNER



WE HAVE A PROJECT IDEA, NOW WHAT? IT IS TIME
FOR **RESIDENTS** AND **PARTNERS** TO CONNECT!

Partners are invited to help make these projects possible through a commitment to **residents**.

There are many ways to **partner**! For instance, **residents** need funders, project managers, designers, community engagement facilitators, event planners, and more!

Residents + Partners = TEAMS!

RESIDENTS

PARTNERS

- Project Managers
- Facilitators
- Designers
- Architects
- Funders
- Contractors
- *and more!*

PARTNER CHECKLIST

With a project in mind:

- Connect with partners — the Public Housing Community Fund can help with this if needed
- Identify a project budget
- Work with NYCHA on an agreement

CALLING ALL PARTNERS!

We need **partners** who can work with NYCHA to obtain **agreements** that will allow for site access and resident engagement for design.

For these agreements, a **project partner** will need to lead as an applicant and:

- Show a funding plan for your project
- Have the required insurance
- Where needed, make sure contractors are paid a prevailing wage
- Commit to NYCHA resident engagement at all stages of the project and collaborate with NYCHA staff and resident leadership to make it happen
- Get input from Property Managers who care for these spaces and know them well
- Get approvals, including signatures from Property Managers and the Resident Associations
- Prepare a maintenance plan

The Public Housing Community Fund will support residents and their partners, serving as matchmakers to bring together the right team for your project. They will help you get started and can guide you along all five steps. Additionally, you should consider Property Managers — the existing stewards of NYCHA's open spaces — to be part of your team as well as other NYCHA resources like Resident Associations, Youth Leadership Councils, Resident Green Communities, and community centers. Invite these groups in for collaboration — let them join your team!

Your agreements with NYCHA allow you to create a private-public partnership to transform an open space, but this site will always be owned by NYCHA.

Plan on this step taking
roughly 4–6 months

DESIGN



ONCE YOU HAVE AN AGREEMENT FROM NYCHA,
YOU CAN BEGIN DESIGNING!

A major goal of NYCHA's Connected Communities is to invite **residents** to lead the design of projects on their campuses, so that the actual needs of communities are heard.

Make time for your neighbors to work together. For example:

Host workshops to share ideas and establish goals — *invite your neighbors, both old and young, and listen to what they say about their needs and vision for the project*

Communicate often and clearly about progress and challenges — *even the simplest projects will have hiccups!*

During design, teams should develop a maintenance plan, working with NYCHA staff to determine what work will be done by Property Managers or others.

Be flexible — *ideas will transform during design to meet the needs of a site or budget!* Invite designers to join your team and translate your vision into drawings, and invite community engagement facilitators to run workshops and help you form your goals and vision.

Time and patience are required!

Try hosting a party, clean-up day, planting flowers, or making temporary upgrades to your site to help keep up the excitement along the way.

TIP: Get your design priced during this phase to make sure that it meets your project budget. If the design and budget do not align, teams may need to:

- Raise additional funds
- Reduce the scope or size of the project, or make changes to save on cost
- Design your project in phases: complete some work now and do more later when additional funds are available

DESIGN CHECKLIST

Now that you have a legal agreement:

- Work with design partners to prepare all required drawings
- Obtain a site survey and complete any testing needed
- Engage in regular meetings and community workshops
- Align your budget and scope of work
- Get NYCHA's review and approval, including Resident Association and Property Manager signoffs
- Host events to keep up momentum

Plan on this step taking roughly 6–12 months



BUILD



WITH A DESIGN COMPLETE, IT IS TIME TO SEE IT BUILT!

Teams may need to invite more partners to make your project come to life, such as:

- ARTISTS to design and paint murals
- LANDSCAPERS or GARDENERS to create gardens
- VENDORS to install playground equipment
- CONTRACTORS to make renovations

When you are ready to begin work, it is time to celebrate!

Plan “groundbreaking” events to honor all that you have already achieved together and what is soon to come!

BUILD CHECKLIST

Once your design is complete:

- Create your build team
- Get your build team insurance verified and approved
- Work with NYCHA on any required items and communicate with them often to coordinate your work
- Start with a “groundbreaking” event
- End with a ribbon-cutting event

Castle Hill Groundbreaking, photo credit Karl Rivera, Center for Justice Innovation

Make sure that these new partners understand the scope of work and provide you with complete cost information for all the labor and materials needed. Discuss possible challenges and work together to prepare what to do in these situations!

Teams can work on a negotiated fee with a single build partner or get bids from a few potential partners — this is up to you! These new partners will also need to meet any requirements called for in your agreement.

Construction can be noisy and disrupt the way a space looks or functions. Since NYCHA campuses are occupied, all work on site needs to be done safely and with consideration. Communicate regularly with NYCHA, resident leadership, and your neighbors, before and during construction so that everyone can prepare.

We recommend that teams stay attentive during this phase. Unexpected issues can arise during construction so include a contingency in your budget to help address challenges in real time.

The amount of time your project takes to build will vary based on the size of your project. Some improvements, like a mural, will take less time than a dog run, for example!

PARDON
OUR
APPEARANCE

○ Mural

Plan on this step taking a few days or weeks

○ Dog Run

Plan on this step taking roughly 4–8+ months

ACTIVATE

IT IS TIME TO USE YOUR NEWLY
TRANSFORMED OPEN SPACE!

This is a big deal! Opening day events — like ribbon-cutting ceremonies — are a wonderful way to honor this moment but the work is not complete after the ribbon is cut. Some would say this is just the beginning!

Teams may want to identify activation partners who will plan activities and events for your site.

Different projects have different needs, for instance gardens need regular watering, dog parks will need to be cleaned, and playground equipment will need to be repaired.

ACTIVATE CHECKLIST

Now that the project is built:

- Identify your activation team
- Follow through on your maintenance plan
- Plan regular activities and events
- Obtain new agreements for activation, repairs, and new partners
- Note to partners: create maintenance endowments!

Activating the space can include:

- Activities and events like chess lessons at the new game tables, a three-point throw contest at the ball court, a scavenger hunt at the playground, book club at the garden, or a puppy meet-and-greet at the dog run.
- Clean-up and maintenance days to keep the space looking great
- Reporting issues like repair needs as soon as you see them!

This final step allows your project to be used for many generations to come! If we put off or delay maintenance, it will be difficult to keep these new open spaces at NYCHA active, fun, and safe.

We can all care for these open spaces together and invite new residents and partners to help us with this important and on-going work.

Stewardship models work! Open spaces like Central Park and the High Line have “friends of” programs and endowments that support long-term maintenance and active programming. You can become a “friend of NYCHA’s open spaces”!



TESTIMONIALS



A NOTE FROM Jeannette Salcedo

Castle Hill Houses Resident Association President

"As a NYC resident that resides in public housing, I realized that if we do not help one another, we will be at the mercy of people who do not want us to survive this 'Project' called public housing. Experiencing each other through green spaces in our neighborhoods can and will create spaces for conversations that lead to change. If we rally around each other and support ideas, programs, and understanding we will create the spaces we want for ourselves and each other. Organizing around green spaces, strategizing with our neighbors and creating the blueprint for sustainable change in our NYCHA communities." *Reflecting on the Green Space Connections project.*



A NOTE FROM Tamika Williams-Moore

Pomonok Houses Resident Association President

"Our updated ball court is the vessel in which people come to the community and enjoy the amenities in their backyard. This is a backyard investment that helps us out a great deal. I think it restores hope in the community, and I'm very excited about that."



A NOTE FROM Vernona Bradham

Roosevelt Houses Resident Association President

"There are always challenges. You expect construction to happen tomorrow, and it's got time to go, but we've got a lot of improvements coming with the \$500,000 from Green Space Connections. It's wonderful, it's something different."*

* Learn more about the Green Space Connections initiative in the following case studies.



A NOTE FROM Priscilla Ruiz

Roosevelt Houses Resident

"We love it here. This is the first time I have had a garden bed. It's relaxing, I come here three or four times a week. You meet new people through these projects, and you have something to look forward to. Then when the finished product is done you feel good because you were part of the process." *Reflecting on the resident garden at Roosevelt Houses.*



A NOTE FROM Maria Guzman

Harborview Terrace Houses
Resident Association President

"For years to come, countless residents will enjoy this space, allowing us to be more active and build a stronger, healthier community." *Reflecting on recent upgrades to Harborview Terrace Houses.*

HARBORVIEW TERRACE ASPHALT ART

CAMPUS: Harborview Terrace

TIME TO COMPLETE: < 12 months

BUDGET: < \$250,000



Harborview Terrace in Hell's Kitchen, photo credit Phil O'Brien

This exciting, fast-paced project took an aging 20,000 square foot play space and turned it into a dynamic and vibrant plaza. Funded by the Pershing Square Foundation, the site's transformation included a community engaged design process facilitated by project partner, genEquality as part of the non-profit organization's Nudge Art Program which brings artists, like Bronx-based Laura Alvarez who led this project as a teaching artist, into collaboration with communities.

FUNDING & SCHEDULE

This project began with a resident-engaged workshop, and the resulting design, painted by more than 100 volunteers over nearly 300 shifts, reflects the team's commitment to inclusivity with the words "YOU BELONG" represented as the project slogan in more than 20 languages throughout the site, including Braille.

In addition to the asphalt art and murals, the ADA-accessible recreation area also received two new basketball backboards, new seating areas, planters, an updated ping pong table, and a new pickleball court.

Since the project's completion in November 2023, activation of the site has included a pickleball clinic for the campus' senior residents.

IMAGINE → PARTNER

Spring 2023

Pershing Square Foundation and Public Housing Community Fund identify project opportunity

DESIGN

Summer 2023

Resident-engaged design with genEquality

BUILD

Fall 2023

Over 100 volunteers transform the space!

ACTIVATE

Spring 2024

The senior pickleball clinic helps to further activate the updated space

PROJECT PARTNERS

Project Team: NYCHA, Public Housing Community Fund, Pershing Square Foundation, genEquality

CAMPUS: Castle Hill Houses

TIME TO COMPLETE: 12–18 mos

BUDGET: < \$350,000

DOG RUN AT CASTLE HILL



Castle Hill workshop, photo credit Elana Ehrenberg, Design Trust for Public Space

Building upon the success of the Connected Communities pilot project at Pomonok Houses, the Helmsley Charitable Trust extended their commitment to NYCHA residents, with funding for green space transformations at four new sites, including Castle Hill Houses in the Bronx as part of the Green Space Connections projects.

The Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) joined the Design Trust for Public Space and the Public Housing Community Fund as the partner responsible for many of the steps of the project's creation and delivery. Grain Collective was brought on-board as the project's design partner.

CJI has experience working closely with NYCHA residents on the Mayor's Action Plan and had great ideas for inviting Castle Hill residents to imagine how to spend the funds available for open space improvements on their campus, including fun techniques like distributing and collecting "idea cards."

FUNDING & SCHEDULE

Residents quickly identified the dog run as a priority for the campus. This dog run will be the first of its kind at NYCHA!

To help build excitement while the project was being bid and the contractors were selected, waste stations adorned with art by Castle Hill youth were installed throughout the campus, and a fun groundbreaking event was planned featuring residents and their pets!

IMAGINE

2022–2023

Dec 2022
Green Space
Connections begins

Jan 2023
Outreach to
residents begins

Mar 2023
Residents vote for
dog run

PARTNER

2023

April 2023
Design
partner
selection

DESIGN

2023–2024

May 2023
Design begins

Aug 2023
Waste storage
events

April 2024
Dog run bid

Aug 2024
Groundbreaking
event

BUILD

2024–2025

Nov 2024
Build begins

Feb 2025
Anticipated
build complete,
activation to
begin!

PROJECT PARTNERS

Due to their experience working at NYCHA on resident-engaged projects, the entire project team, including CJI, Grain Collective, and the Castle Hill residents were able to work together efficiently to create a thoughtful design solution. CJI has an existing licensing agreement with NYCHA which they used for this project.

Project Team: NYCHA, Center for Justice Innovation, Grain Collective, Gallop Construction, Castle Hill Residents, Public Housing Community Fund, Design Trust for Public Space, and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

PATTERSON ADULT FITNESS ZONE

CAMPUS: Patterson Houses

TIME TO COMPLETE: 18–24 mos

BUDGET: < \$400,000

Patterson Fitness Zone Rendering, photo credit Kompan

The Patterson adult fitness zone, like the dog run at Castle Hill, is one of four new Green Space Connections projects.

The Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) also led the project's delivery including extensive engagement with both the residents and the resident leaders. Moving at "the speed of trust," the group dedicated the time needed to align the goals of the group, which in this case led to a year-long **IMAGINE** phase.

One major component of this project is an adult fitness zone reflecting the needs of the residents — over 75% of NYCHA's residents are over 18 years old. This adult fitness zone was designed and constructed by Kompan, an innovative play equipment company working in collaboration with Patterson residents.

FUNDING & SCHEDULE

To activate the space during the **IMAGINE** and **DESIGN** phases, CJI worked with Artolution and youth and adult volunteers from Patterson Houses to design and paint a mural celebrating the rich history of the campus and its residents.

IMAGINE

2022–2023

Dec 2022
Green Space
Connections begins

Feb 2023
Outreach to
residents begins

DESIGN

2024

Mar 2024
Design begins

June 2024
Mural project

BUILD

2025

Jan 2025
Anticipated start
of build

ACTIVATE

2025

Spring 2025
Activation to
begin

PROJECT PARTNERS

Project Team: NYCHA, Center for Justice Innovation, Kompan, Patterson Houses Residents, Artolution, Public Housing Community Fund, Design Trust for Public Space, and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

Patterson Mural, photo credit Alex Zablocki, Public Housing Community Fund



POMONOK BALL COURTS

CAMPUS: Pomonok Houses

TIME TO COMPLETE: 24–36 mos

BUDGET: < \$500,000

Pomonok Basketball Court, photo credit Tameek Williams

The colorful and exciting upgrades to the ball courts at the Pomonok Houses in Queens is the pilot project of the Connected Communities initiative. It celebrates the principles outlined in NYCHA's Connected Communities Guidebook to enhance physical and social connections between residents and their communities.

Since the project's completion in 2021, the iconic ball court has become an active site for games, tournaments, and recreation for NYCHA residents, old and young!

FUNDING & SCHEDULE

This project began with a funding commitment from the Helmsley Charitable Trust to the Public Housing Community Fund. From April to October 2019, Hester Street created activities and events to engage Pomonok residents to identify their vision for the open spaces on their campus. This engagement included multiple campus walks, tabling events, interviews, workshops, surveys, voting, and a restoration day. More details about this process can be found in the Community Engagement Report and Action Plan prepared by Hester Street in February 2020.

From this process, based on the feedback received from over 200 residents, the ball courts were determined to be a high priority for improvement. The scope of work included new surfacing and painting of the court, new hoops, nets, and lighting.

IMAGINE

2019–2020

2019
Participatory design
with Hester Street

DESIGN

2020–2021

2020
Technical design
by NYCHA

2020
DELAY
COVID-19

BUILD

2021–2022

2021
June–November

ACTIVATE

2022

2022
The ball courts
are open!

PROJECT PARTNERS

This project was designed and managed by NYCHA's Capital Project team. NYCHA, in partnership with the Public Housing Community Fund, obtained a minimum of three bids from contractors, from which they selected the lowest qualified bidder.

Project Team: NYCHA, Public Housing Community Fund, Hester Street, The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, UA Construction.

OPENING THE EDGE

CAMPUS: Lillian Wald Houses

TIME TO COMPLETE: >36 mos

BUDGET: < \$1,000,000

Lillian Wald Houses rendering, photo credit Davies Toews Architecture

The project, proposed by artist Jane Greengold in 2014, convened a coalition of **residents, neighbors, and project partners** advocating for the removal of a fence to allow the community to use a 4,000-sf open space in new ways.

Through multiple participatory design workshops, residents expressed the need for more seating and space allowing for cultural programming, including planned or impromptu performances. This resident-led process inspired NYCHA's Connected Communities initiative and expanded implementation of public-private partnerships.

The new accessible design will have benches, a sloped platform for performances, tables, paths, and new lighting (and no fence!)

FUNDING & SCHEDULE

Over two-thirds of the project's \$1.1M budget will go towards its construction and will be paid for by public funds from elected officials. Costs for participatory workshops, events, project management, and design fees, were paid for by city and federal grants, and generous donations from private foundations and non-profit organizations.

IMAGINE

2014–2017

- 2014 Initial ideas for Opening the Edge
- 2016 Site selection and resident engagement
- 2017 Preliminary designs created for site

PARTNER

2018–2019

- 2018 Fundraising
- 2019 NYCHA license agreement
- 2020 **DELAY** COVID-19

DESIGN

2021–2022

- 2021–2022 Architects and residents finalize designs
- 2023 Public funding review

BUILD

2024–2025

- 2024 Search for contractor begins
- 2025 Work to be completed

PROJECT PARTNERS

Project Team: NYCHA, Design Trust for Public Space, Wald Community Design Team, Jane Greengold, Immanuel Oni, Mollie Serena, Dwaal Lighting, Davies Toews Architecture

Community Partners: Henry Street Settlement's Jobs Plus program, the Boys and Girls Republic, LES Girls Club, the Resident Association at Wald, FABnyc

Funders: Speaker Corey Johnson, City Council Member Carlina Rivera, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, PARC Foundation, Trinity Church Wall Street Foundation, Public Housing Community Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, NYC Building Congress Foundation, and Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We hope that you feel inspired to transform open space at NYCHA!

Residents and partners: we cannot wait to connect — please reach out to the Public Housing Community Fund to share ideas for projects and sites and let us know the way that you can contribute.

Again, this is a guide for all NYCHA residents as well as all prospective funders, designers, managers, facilitators, builders, artists, landscapers, etc. We are so excited to hear from you ALL!

We would like to thank everyone who played a pivotal role in the making of this deck of cards, the building of relationships, and the furthering of open space improvements at NYCHA:

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Connected Communities Guidebook](#)

New York City Housing Authority and the New York City Department of City Planning

[Open Space Master Plan](#)

New York City Housing Authority

[A Roadmap for Equitable Open Space Planning for the New York City Housing Authority](#)

Columbia School of International and Public Affairs

[SAFE PLACES, ACTIVE SPACES! A Community Playbook for Transforming Public Spaces in Your Neighborhood](#)

Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

People Make Parks

Partnership for Parks and Hester Street Collaborative

[How Can I Improve My Park?](#)

Center for Urban Pedagogy

Here is a quick summary of our five steps — **IMAGINE**, **PARTNER**, **DESIGN**, **BUILD**, and **ACTIVATE** — including a consolidation of the checklists provided. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask the Public Housing Community Fund: openspace@communityfund.nyc.

NYCHA celebrates public-private partnerships for open space improvements on their campuses and will support teams with their projects to the extent possible. Some projects may not be approved by NYCHA — this is up to their discretion.



- Review the open space on your campus
- Consider nearby amenities like public parks or seating areas that already exist
- Brainstorm project ideas with your neighbors
- Contact the Public Housing Community Fund or go to the project website: www.communityfund.nyc/openspace



- Connect with partners — the Public Housing Community Fund can help with this if needed
- Identify a project budget
- Work with NYCHA on an agreement



- Work with design partners to prepare all required drawings
- Obtain a site survey and complete any testing needed
- Engage in regular meetings and community workshops
- Align your budget and scope of work
- Get NYCHA's review and approval, including Resident Association and Property Manager signoffs
- Host events to keep up momentum



- Create your build team
- Get your build team insurance verified and approved
- Work with NYCHA on any required items and communicate with them often to coordinate your work
- Start with a “groundbreaking” event
- End with a ribbon-cutting event



- Identify your activation team
- Follow through on your maintenance plan
- Plan regular activities and events
- Obtain new agreements for activation, repairs, and new partners
- Note to partners: create maintenance endowments!



THIS IS THE INITIAL ITERATION OF OUR GUIDE. THE PROCESSES OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK IN WITH YOUR PROJECT PARTNERS, THE PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY FUND, AND YOUR NYCHA LIAISONS TO ENSURE YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

CONSIDER THIS AN INVITATION TO **IMAGINE**, **PARTNER**, **DESIGN**, **BUILD**, AND **ACTIVATE** NYCHA'S OPEN SPACES — WE ARE EXCITED TO HEAR FROM YOU!