

## SITE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The following is a general checklist of items that should make up a first stage site assessment. See the practices sections that follow for more specific information related to soil, water, and vegetation assessment.

### INVENTORY: SITE HISTORY

- past site use
  - industrial use
  - archeology
  - filling, dumping, other soil disturbance
  - existing or abandoned utilities
- historic topography
- historic soils
  - contamination
  - levels of contamination (relates to NYS and EPA assessment)
- historic drainage
  - lowland or upland
  - floodplain or wetland
  - history of flooding or erosion
  - historical movement of water through the site
  - historic vegetation
  - forest, wetland, or marsh
- key resources
  - historic maps (even hand-drawn maps that can be overlain on a base plan may indicate historic streams and springs)
  - historic site photos and other archival materials
  - historic aerial photos
  - names of places related to historic conditions or uses (i.e., “Yellow Springs” or “Stony Run”)
  - oral histories provided by former maintenance workers and caretakers

### INVENTORY: SITE CONTEXT

- social factors
  - user behavior
  - user desires

- circulation
  - pedestrian
  - vehicular
  - service
  - bicycle
  - mass transit
- views
  - on site
  - off site
  - bad views to be hidden
- hydrology
  - watershed
  - water table
  - wetlands
  - drainage patterns
  - surface water features
  - tidal conditions
  - neighboring context
  - sewers, whether combined sanitary sewers or stormwater sewers
- wildlife impacts
  - insects, fish, birds, land mammals
  - rare or endangered species
- landscape character
  - historic landscape
  - natural area
  - woodland
  - disturbed
  - formal garden
  - river corridor
  - wetland
- legal factors
  - zoning requirements
    - waterfront
    - parking area treatments
  - code requirements
    - required property line set backs
    - wetland delineations
    - floodplains restricting building locations or requiring elevations
  - utility or roadway easements
    - presence of mapped streets (NYCDCP restrictions)
    - waterlines (NYCDEP restrictions)
    - stormwater (NYCDEP restrictions)
    - private utility restrictions or suggested practices
- roadway and utility offsets
  - streetlights
  - hydrants
  - driveways
  - corner off-sets
- special natural area district (SNAD) requirements (Bronx and Staten Island)

### INVENTORY: SITE CONDITIONS

- topography
  - slopes
  - low points
- soils/geology
  - geology, including depth to bedrock
  - subsurface and soil morphology
  - soil biology
- fertility analysis
- chemical analysis
  - percolation rates
  - hardpan
  - sinkholes
  - erosion potential
  - drainage rates
  - landfill or contaminated sites
- hydrology
  - existing streams and wetlands
  - setbacks and buffers, as necessary
  - floodplains and coastal erosion zones
- vegetation
  - existing vegetation
    - plant species
    - health of vegetation
    - plants as indicative of soil conditions
  - quality
    - rare
    - native
    - mixed native and/or invasive
    - invasive
  - trees
    - size
    - type
    - location
    - health
  - habitat presence
    - habitat type(s)
    - sort of habitat

- provided by plants
  - healthy and robust or unhealthy and stressed
- understory types
- stress indicators
  - small, scorched, or off-color foliage
  - early fall color or leaf drop
  - tip dieback
  - presence of insects or disease
  - suckering from the trunk
- climate
  - air quality, temperature, and humidity
  - sun/shade patterns and reflected heat
  - wind
  - precipitation rates for rain and snow
  - depth to frost
  - freeze and thaw
  - microclimate
  - fungus, mold, or insect problems
- urban
  - subsurface utilities
  - subsurface foundation remnants
  - subsurface transit ways
- noise

### SITE ANALYSIS

- site opportunities and constraints
  - stormwater management
  - soil capacity
  - soil contamination
  - tree health and appropriate removals, pruning, and replacement
- design determinants and the capacity of the site to support program
  - appropriate planting strategies
  - fit of park into its larger context
- Best Management Practices to be applied
  - reduction of impervious surfaces
  - redirection of drainage to natural systems