

Exploring the Gowanus Canal Conservancy



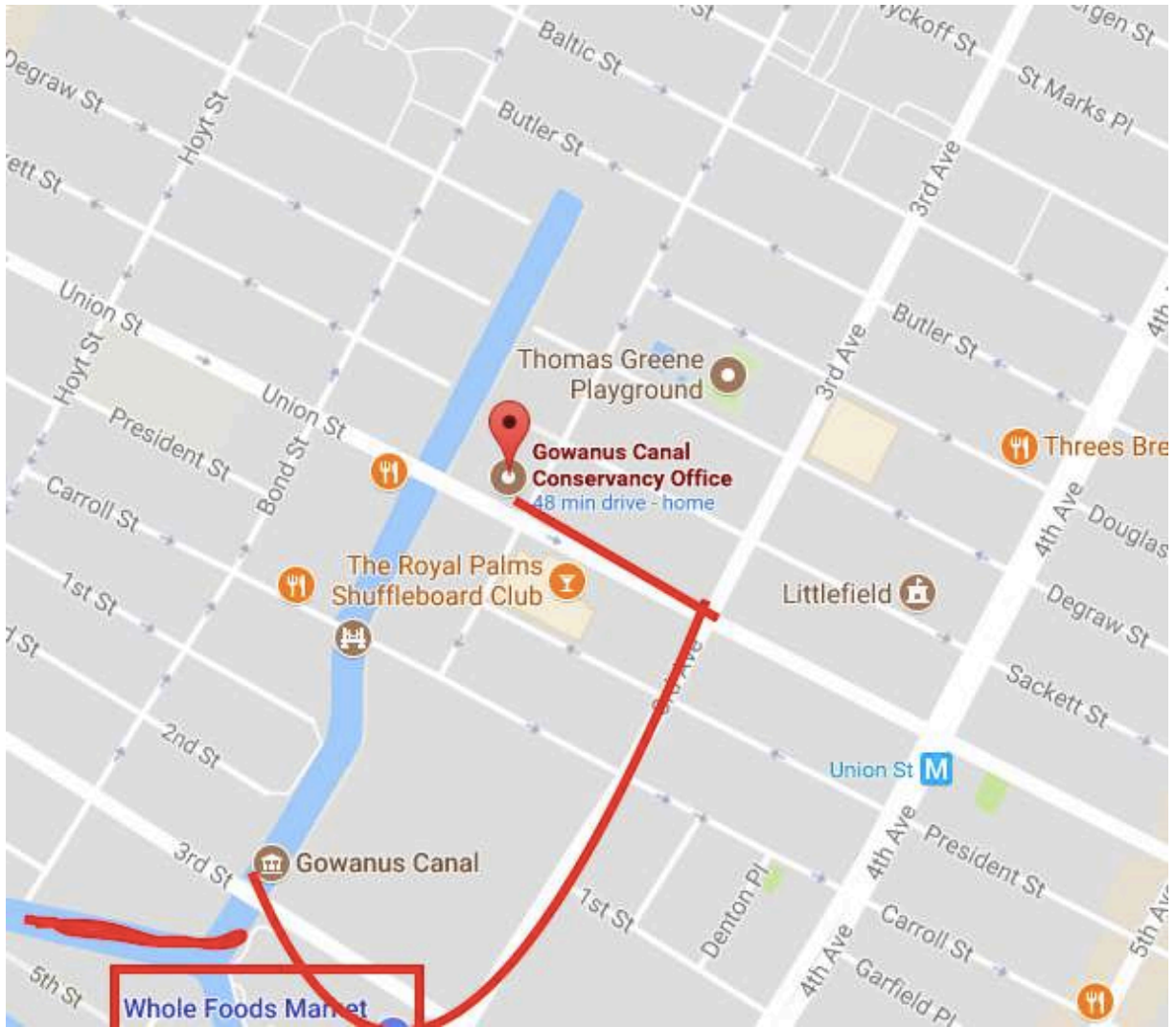
This is a newly built residential building by the Gowanus Canal. I chose this image because it is very modernized and eye catching.

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Introduction and Pre-visit Reflections

In class, we always discussed the Gowanus canal and its improvements as well as future modifications. We previously visited the Gowanus Canal where I was first introduced to this neighborhood. The conservancy project was mentioned and my interest was drawn completely towards the cleanup process. We were meeting with one of the members from the conservancy who were skilled in the topic and idea of the conservancy. Certain parts of Gowanus had already started the idea of cleaning up in terms of preventing sewage overflow from entering the canal. Inlets were also built on the sidewalks to prevent water overflow. This can help the canal in multiple ways.

Map Area of Investigation



Photos and Sketches

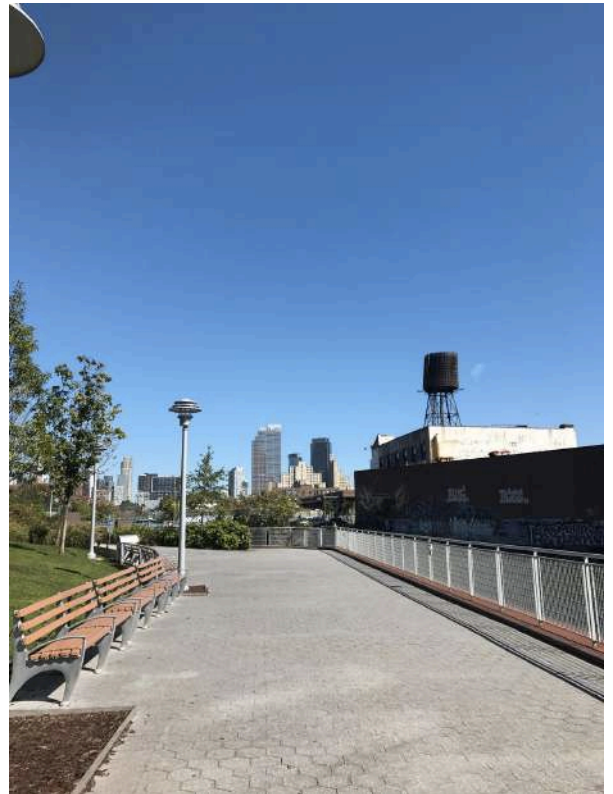
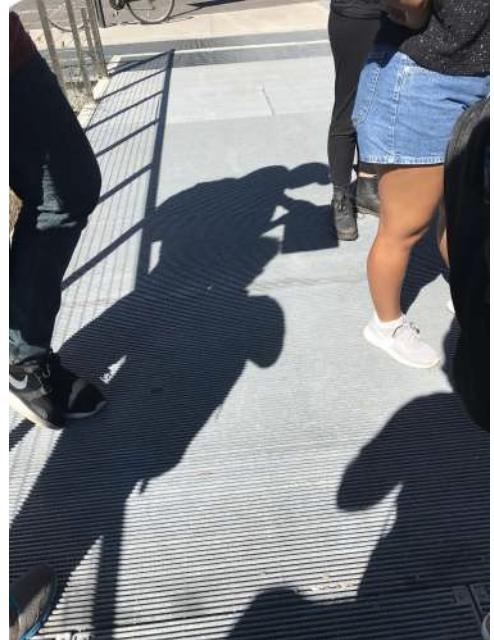


This metal track prevents sewage overflow and was recently inserted onto some of the pathways of Gowanus.

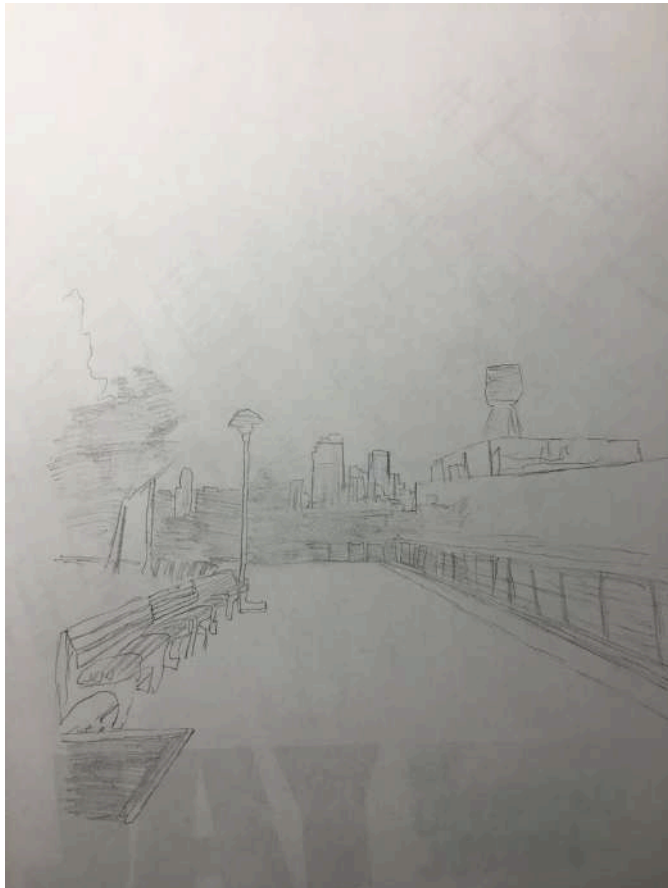


Inlets were created on the sidewalks to prevent runoff and sewage along the Gowanus

has a green tint, which indicates a form of pollution.



This is the new walkway open to the public with new benches and seats by the canal. It offers a nice view of other buildings.



Analysis:

The Gowanus Canal is undergoing many new changes in the near future as far as the superfund cleanup. A major problem causing the polluted canal is sewage. Sewage overflow is caused by lots of rain falling on hard surfaces such as road and sidewalks. If you reduce the rainwater going into the sewer, you can prevent overflows. New York City has started to build green infrastructures. It will take in the rainwater and absorb it to prevent it from getting into the sewage. As a result of this, sewage overflow will be able to be saved. This is known as a test drive but it isn't being tested at its full capacity. The city will not be doing enough to protect the Gowanus canal. About 60 percent of the issue will be resolved. However, there is so much potential for green infrastructure rather than what the city is providing. There are many different methods to creating a green infrastructure. There will be an analysis followed by requests and recommendations in developing the watershed and managing storm water. In addition, any time green space is built, you must take care of it. There isn't enough maintenance power to maintain it as it should. They physically don't have time to come and take care of the space as well. Trash is one of the biggest maintenance issues as well from the roads and people. Trash blocks the flow of the water, which requires care. The conservancy carries seven people full time staff, part time employees and volunteers as well. The volunteers have a big role in designing. Landscape architects, planners and several types of expertise are part of the project to develop the conservancy. The more green infrastructure in which is built brings better water quality to the conservancy. The conservancy is affiliated with a school across the street that is able to help out with

planting, bio soils and to provide education-based learning to the students as well providing betterment for the conservancy.

This building (modern building shown above) is the first residential building built in the canal. The neighborhood is undergoing a green zoning process. This neighborhood is also made for manufacturing purposes, which is slowly changing as the area gets rezoned into commercial and light manufacturing. The city planning agency is leading the process where meetings are held to discuss neighborhood access, economy, and to receive feedback for new residents and current who the area affects. All of the properties in Gowanus are being priced out and are waiting for the rezoning process to start building. The conservancy is focused more on the waterfront. The conservancy is advocating for better access to the water as the canal gets cleaned up. Residents and people would like to spend time on the waterfront. Along with this, problems such as water rising and climbing change have a strong effect. The plan is to have canoes and kayaks for people to enjoy by the waterfront.

The city went through an analysis to provide dips and inlets in the sidewalk to help the water flow. We visited the Third Street Bridge near the Whole Foods. The turning basin will be starting construction this fall. It's known as a testing ground for the canal to further apply to dredge in three different sections. In the year 2030, the construction and renovation should be completed. Funding is needed which is being held back and delaying the process. The cleanup costs roughly 500 million dollars, which

is all-private funded. The polluters have to pay based on what they polluted in the canal.

The rest of budget goes into the contract and planning of the cleanup. The Gowanus canal conservancy has multiple groups and sponsors for providing funding purposes to the organization. In the future plan, there aren't any businesses to be left in the area.

Due to the rezoning process, there will be a dedicated industrial zone. Out of the industrial zone will be replaced will residential buildings and apartments.

Keywords/Vocabulary

1. Conservancy
2. Rezoning Process
3. Dredge
4. Green Infrastructures
5. Inlet

Questions:

1. When the conservancy starts to redevelop the canal, will the residents be affected and how?
2. Will it be a difficult and challenging task to regain the funding from the polluters to cleanup the canal?
3. How will the affects of the conservancy's actions change the environment long term?