



# CONNECTING EVERYONE TO THE OUTDOORS.

Our mission **is to create parks and protect land for people**, ending the outdoor equity gap.

Access to the outdoors is a **fundamental human need** and essential to our health and well-being. People need parks.

Communities that place a high value on outdoor access for all are **healthier, more resilient, and more equitable**.





# Parks and outdoor spaces are **COMMUNITY IMPACT MULTIPLIERS**

When communities come together to create meaningful outdoor places and experiences, everyone benefits from:

- Community cohesion and collaboration
- Innovative learning
- Improved physical, mental, and social health
- Equitable jobs, economic opportunities, and community-led investment
- Reduced heatwaves, flooding, and wildfires
- Cleaner air and water

# The Park Divide

**100 million people**  
including  
**28 million children**  
*don't have a park*  
within a 10-minute  
walk of home.



Parks in  
**majority nonwhite**  
**neighborhoods** are  
*½ as large*  
and serve nearly  
*5x more people*  
than parks in  
**majority white**  
**neighborhoods.**

# OUR MODEL

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**CREATE AND PROTECT GREEN SPACES** that deliver lasting, transformational impact in the communities that need them most

**PROVIDE CRITICAL RESOURCES TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** financial support, training, research, mapping, and expertise in law, logistics, policy, and real estate

**GENERATE LEADING-EDGE RESEARCH, TOOLS, AND POLICY** for equitable green spaces within communities nationwide

**EXPAND ACCESS TO LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL FUNDING** for historically underfunded communities





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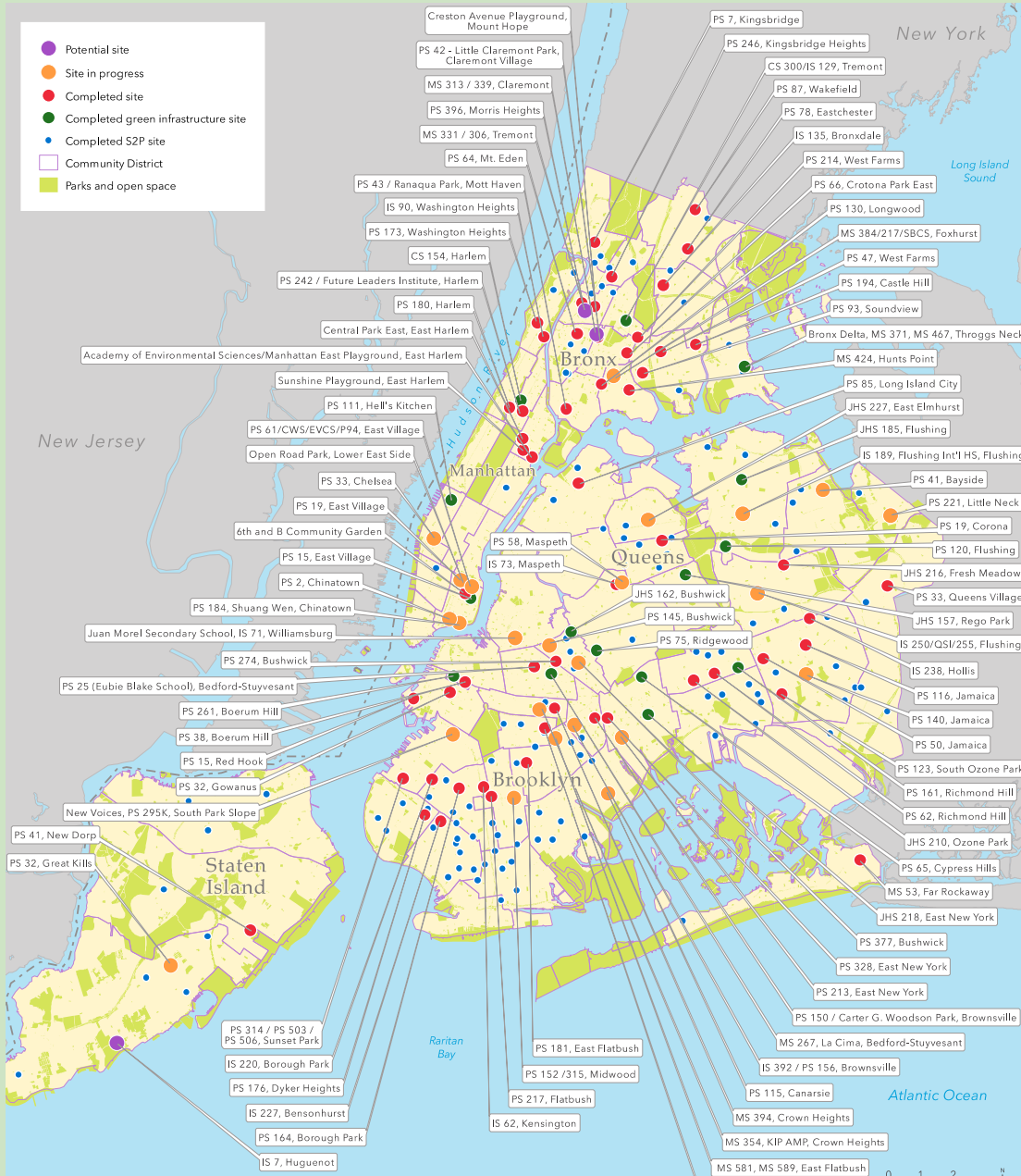
Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

# NYC Community Schoolyards Program

Mary Alice Lee / Trust for Public Land

# NYC Community Schoolyards Program: The Model

- Public-Private Partnership
- Student Participatory Design
- Nature-rich, climate resilient design
- Community engagement to activate - Partner with CBOs
- Fund Maintenance, Stewardship, and Environmental Ed Programs
- Schools as anchors for neighborhood transformation



# Green Infrastructure

Approximately 1 million gallons stormwater/per site/per year



PS 107X –Soundview, The Bronx



**Before and After:**  
Bronx Latin/X158  
Morrisania, The Bronx



**Before and After:**  
Pan American International High School  
Elmhurst, Queens

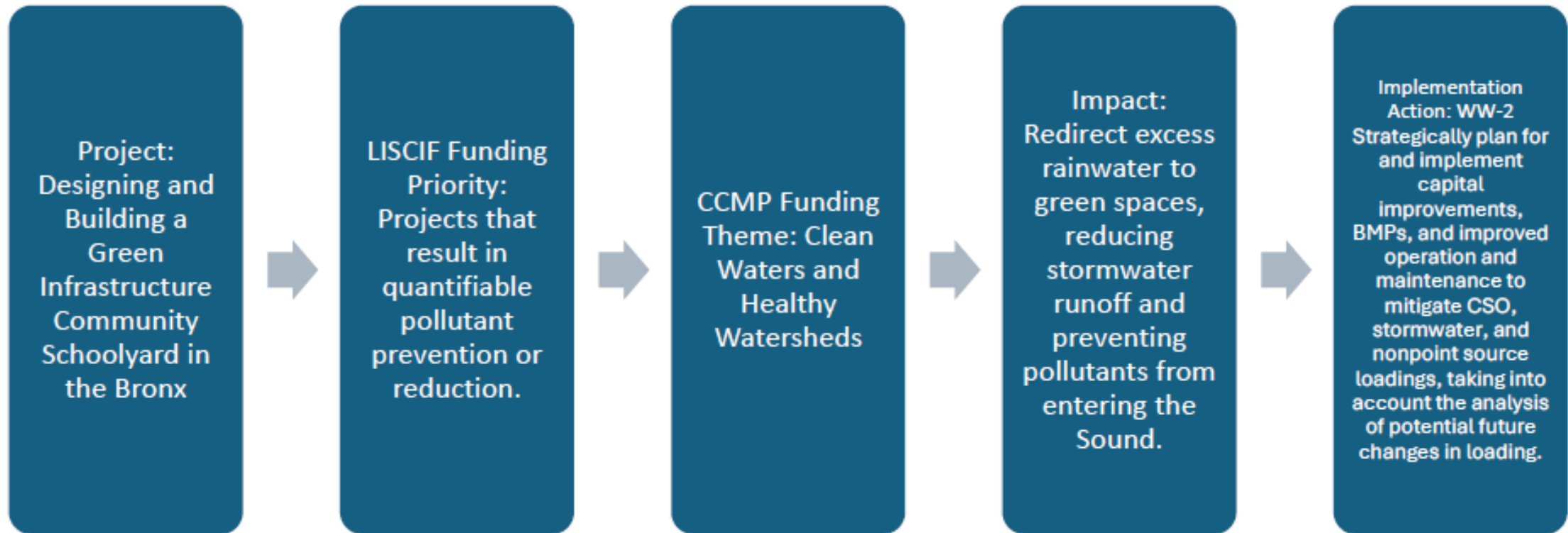




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**PS 146X Edward J. Collins & P186X @ X146**



# 968 Cauldwell Avenue, Bronx, NY

## Neighborhood: Morrisania

### Students: 304

- 94% exhibit economic need
- 57% identify as Hispanic
- 33% identify as Black
- 26% with disabilities
- 18% English Language Learners

### The area within a 10-minute walk is home to 46,154 residents

- 89% are low- to moderate-income
- 58% identify as Hispanic
- 37% identify as Black.



# 146X Before Intervention



# Impact on the Sound

Located in the Ward's Island wastewater treatment plant combined sewershed.

Overflows into the Bronx Kill and connecting waterbodies, the Harlem River and East River, where flooding leads to pollutants entering the Long Island Sound.

We are restoring and impacting 31,000 sq. ft. space, converting surfaces from 100% impervious to over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> pervious.

Infiltration or slow-release will reduce CSOs, improving water quality in the Bronx Kill and its connecting waterbodies.

Green infrastructure features will be sized to manage over 28,985 gallons of runoff, which translates to managing approximately 1.1 million gallons of stormwater per year.

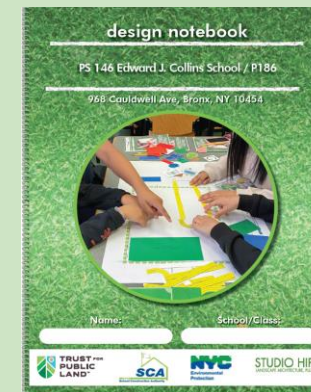
# Participatory Design:

## Students and Community Working Together to Design the Playground



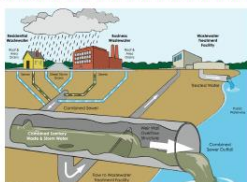
# Playground Research

Students learn where stormwater goes and about the Long Island Sound



## GLOSSARY

**Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)** – When stormwater and untreated sewage from our sewer system overflow into our local waterways during a large rain or snow event.



**Existing Conditions** – The state of a site before it is renovated.

**Equity** – Fairness. Does the new space include something for everyone who will use it?

**Estuary** – Long Island Sound is an estuary, a place where fresh water from rivers mixes with salt water from the Atlantic Ocean. Like other estuaries, it is among the most productive ecosystems on earth.



**Gazebo** – An outdoor shade structure with a roof etc.

**Green Roof** – Plants growing in trays on a roof to help absorb rainwater and cool a space.

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## GLOSSARY

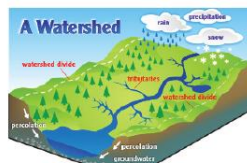
**Sustainability** – Meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



**Templates** – To-scale movable model pieces that represent different elements of the schoolyard.



**Watershed** – The area of land draining into a common basin or reservoir.



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## GLOSSARY

**Native Plant** – A plant that has grown in your area naturally for a really long time (pre-European settlement).

**Pervious** – Allowing water to pass through.



**Rain Gardens** – Shallow gardens that soak up the rain that runs off impervious surfaces like asphalt and concrete.

**Runoff** – Stormwater that flows off of an impermeable surface.

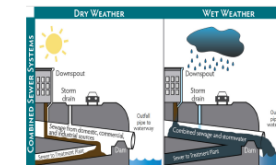


**Scale** – To make bigger or smaller proportionally. The relationship between a map and an actual outdoor place.

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## DESIGN SESSION 2

**Stormwater Management & Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs):**



Why is it called a "combined sewer system"?

Which items will help capture stormwater in the schoolyard? List 5 items:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



COLOR YOUR OWN SQUID!  
Image credit: Lucy Reading-Whitman for the Long Island Sound Study

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“Sewer in a Suitcase” and Combined Sewer Overflows

# Schematic Plan

- Kids chose theme of sea creatures
  - Color seal art: jellyfish, dolphins, mermaids, starfish, sharks, and other underwater scenes



# Current Status: Under Construction

Opening Fall 2026

- Community celebration and ribbon cutting
- Remarks from TPL, LISP, gov't officials, school principals, and the kids

*“To everyone in the audience, always advocate for what you believe in, always advocate for your dreams, and always advocate for yourself. We believed in our dream to have a brand new schoolyard and we achieved it.”*

– Naz, middle schooler at recent schoolyard opening



# What Does Greening Look Like?

- Learning Gardens/Outdoor Classrooms
- Environmental Education Signs



- Porous Surfacing
- Green Roofs on Sheds and Gazebos

# What Does Greening Look Like?

Rain gardens and infiltrating turf fields



# Connecting Students to Nature

We want to foster and support a love of nature



- All of our yards include 20-30 trees, which the students help select.
- Most sites include learning gardens, which students plan and plant.
- Outdoor classrooms offer spaces for students get hands-on introductions to botany, pollination, and other earth sciences, when they plant flowers, vegetables and herbs.
- We've built raised vegetable beds, sensory gardens, pollinator plantings, rain gardens, and even forest walks.

# Stewardship Support

Tree Care, Planting Days, Community Activities



- Environmental Ed Programs focused on the trees in the schoolyard.
  - NYC Street Tree Map
  - Meet a Tree
  - Leaf ID

# Green Infrastructure Assemblies/Workshops After Yard is Open

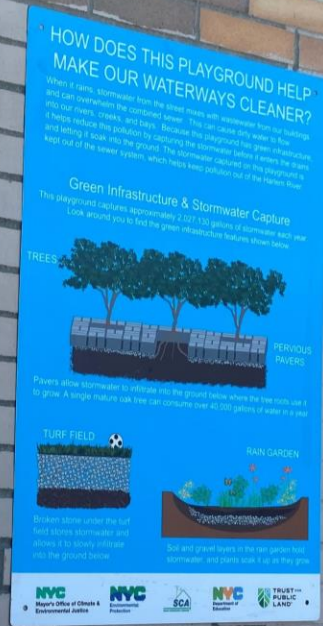


# Environmental Literacy



## Educating the next generation of environmental stewards

Students learn about climate-change mitigation when they experience firsthand how their new playgrounds soak up stormwater through shade trees, bioswales, plantings, pervious pavement and turf fields.



*“The kids knew they were part of something bigger. They did the design, then they’d run to the window to watch the construction. This was a journey the students led. They felt respected. TPL’s community schoolyards program let my kids understand the change they can have. The lessons they learned about addressing climate change are going to stick with them forever.”*

- Principal Pradel, PS 38K