

REBUILD BY DESIGN

CASE STUDIES

Case studies were introduced by Kellie Terry, Executive Director of THE POINT CDC; Jackie Kennedy, Strategic Engagement and Mobilization Manager of the Brownsville Partnership; Drew Curtis, Director of Community Development and Environmental Justice for the Ironbound Community Corporation; and Adam Lubinsky from WXY with James Johnson from Debevoise & Plimpton LLP.

Kellie Terry, Executive Director of THE POINT CDC in the neighborhood of Hunts Point in the Bronx, recounted two community initiatives. First, the South Bronx Greenway initiative, which builds off of two prior master plans to connect residential and business communities to the waterfront. Second, a revitalization and cleanup project that increased community access to the Bronx River. The Bronx River redevelopment was particularly successful despite limited resources because the community created a coalition working group that engaged Congressman José Serrano, who worked with them and became “a true champion for the Bronx River.” This partnership led to the Bronx River Alliance, a public-private partnership that employs community members to restore the river. Both of these initiatives succeeded thanks to early collaboration between government and community organizations, which led to plans that were built from current or existing neighborhood visions for change rather than launching a new search for solutions. Replicating this requires a community that is organized, has resources, and is prepared to articulate their needs clearly to government.

Jackie Kennedy, Strategic Engagement and Mobilization Manager of the Brownsville Partnership, discussed the process of bringing bike lanes into Brownsville, Brooklyn. Brownsville has historically lacked investment into street safety or physical neighborhood improvements. The Brownsville Partnership made creating a bike lane network a priority and dedicated resources to hiring an organizer for the initiative. By closely collaborating with the Department of Transportation and the Brooklyn District Public Health Office, the Partnership transformed its initial vision for a single lane in the community into a 10-year bike master plan with 5.8 miles of bike lanes scheduled for Brownsville by 2015. The Department of Transportation had a consistent hand in helping plan community events and meetings, and the Brooklyn District Public Health Office discussed street safety with parents and children through their relationship with the local schools. This collaboration ensured that the community determined the bike lane locations and would support the plan’s implementation.

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Drew Curtis, Director of Community Development and Environmental Justice for the Ironbound Community Corporation, shared the process of the Brownfield Area-wide Planning Project in Newark, NJ. Funded by the US EPA, it focused on redeveloping an industrial zone that included the former Ballantine Brewery and an inactive rail line. A local steering committee formed with diverse representation from the community to ensure that all requests related to the project could be heard and addressed throughout the process. The steering committee included residents, businesses, area nonprofits, and representatives from the City of Newark, and the State Department of Environmental Protection. The Ironbound Community Corporation worked on a series of community meetings while also focusing on day-to-day organizing in the community, creating a plan with buy-in from a broad range of stakeholders. Today, that plan is being executed and a stakeholder-supported revitalization is underway.

Adam Lubinsky from WXY presented a computer-based tool that uses simulations to help stakeholders visualize different planning scenarios. His firm used a version of it during a dispute over affordable housing in Westchester County in which **James Johnson from Debevoise & Plimpton LLP** was appointed Court Monitor. Both Johnson and Lubinsky talked about how making the data accessible and intelligible to government officials, developers, and residents helped these different stakeholder move from conflict to consensus by fostering an understanding of the trade-offs that would be involved in pursuing different visions of development. Applying this approach earlier in the process would further advance collaboration.