



III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GOVERNORS ISLAND BACKGROUND

Governors Island is a 172-acre island in the heart of New York Harbor. It is located 800 yards from Lower Manhattan and 400 yards from Brooklyn. First settled by the Lenape, then the site of the first Dutch settlement, the Island was home to the British royal governor during the colonial era. For almost two centuries after these initial settlements, Governors Island was an active military base, first home to the U. S. Army from 1800 to the 1960s and later the U.S. Coast Guard. The U.S. Coast Guard left the Island in 1996.

The Island's northern portion, which includes houses, brick structures and forts dating from 1810 to 1940, was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1985. This district, totaling 92 acres, received local landmark protection in 1996. The southern part of the Island, created with landfill in the 1900s, totals 80 acres and features numerous non-historic buildings.

In 2003, President Bush designated 22 acres of the Island's historic district, including two 1812-era forts, as a National Monument that is now managed by the National Park Service (NPS). In 2003, the Federal government deeded the remaining 150 acres of the Island to the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC). The Federal deed stipulated requirements for public access and public space, educational and cultural uses and restricted other future uses. It also established the expectation that the Island would become economically sustainable. GIPEC is a public entity established to operate, plan and develop the Island. The Island was open to the public for the first time in 2003.

STRATEGY TO DEVELOP GOVERNORS ISLAND: STARTING WITH PUBLIC ACCESS AND PUBLIC SPACE

The mission of GIPEC is to redevelop Governors Island with a mix of tenants, open space, and public amenities. Working in consultation with civic leaders and public officials, GIPEC has articulated a multi-pronged strategy to bring Governors Island back to life:

- Expand public access and early signature uses of the Island
- Invest in historic stabilization and Island infrastructure
- Execute a multi-phase, mixed-use development strategy
- Create a world-class park and public spaces

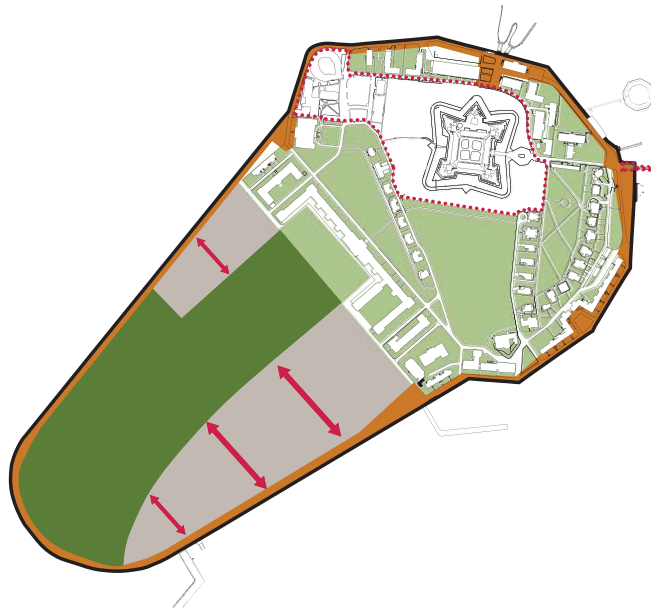


Governors Island sits in New York Harbor framed by city skylines.

Visitation and use as a public space connects the Island to the life of the City while ongoing investment in the physical fabric of the Island is essential for both preservation and new uses. The creation of a world-class park and public space on Governors Island is essential to the transformation of the Island from an abandoned military base, accessible only by boat and closed to the public, into a vibrant, thriving mixed-use destination for the region. Development and tenancy of the Island will proceed in multiple phases, with the first phase bringing a discrete group of educational and recreational uses. Future tenancies will include a mix of commercial and not-for-profit enterprises over time.

The creation of new uses and spaces takes advantage of the Island's attributes, including its extraordinary views, unique vantage point on the Harbor and established landscapes. But it must also address the challenges of the Island, both as a public space and future home for a broad array of uses. The Island is in effect now two islands—the south is desolate and flat, with acres of asphalt and sparsely planted, stunted trees. It lacks many of the public amenities necessary for year-round public usage. And, while many possible uses for the Island's existing and future buildings have been contemplated, potential tenants await the Island's transformation.

The Park and Public Space Master Plan is the first phase of a multi-phase process to unlock the potential of Governors Island.



LEGEND

-  THE GREAT PROMENADE
-  EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICT OPEN SPACE
-  "SUMMER" PARK
-  DEVELOPMENT ZONES
-  GOVERNORS ISLAND NATIONAL MONUMENT
-  PUBLIC ACCESS IN DEVELOPMENT ZONES

In 2006, GIPEC established 87 acres as park and public spaces.

DESIGN GOALS FOR THE PARK AND PUBLIC SPACES

The park and public spaces of Governors Island total 87 acres:

- The landscapes of the northern Historic District total 33 acres (not including the National Monument)
- New 40-acre parkland on the southern half
- The perimeter Promenade, 2.2 miles in length, totals 14 acres

In 2006, GIPEC conducted an international competition to select a team to design these spaces. The competition brief stated the goal of transforming the public spaces into an exceptional destination that would serve all New Yorkers, enhance the Island’s attributes and offer unique experiences. GIPEC made clear that the design would need to transform the Island and integrate its two halves, serving as a wonderful space for the public and a desirable setting for uses of the Island’s buildings.

In addition, a compelling design will establish standards for design excellence for the entire Island.

The West 8 Team was selected in December 2007. West 8 is a Netherlands-based firm leading the project from their New York City office. The team includes Rogers Marvel Architects, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects and other experts in a variety of disciplines.

DEVELOPMENT ZONES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

This Park and Public Space Master Plan was not intended to address the future tenancies in historic buildings or new development. Uses of the Island’s historic buildings, as well as uses and design of the buildings in

the 33 acres of southern Island land reserved for development, will be addressed in later phases. The 87 acres of the plan do not include the 33 acres identified as development zones or the acreage of built historic structures (totalling 1.4 million square feet). The plan also does not include the 22 acres managed by NPS.

GIPEC has articulated its commitment to public access and view corridors through the spaces identified as development zones. GIPEC will work with civic, business and public leaders in the shaping of development plans in the future.

WHAT IS THE PARK AND PUBLIC SPACE MASTER PLAN?

The Master Plan is a set of principles, drawings, text and renderings that depict the fundamental concepts for the design of the Island’s park and public spaces. It shows the key features of the spaces, their character, and their organization on the site. The plan illustrates the kinds of activities that take place in the park and public spaces; the places, elements, and habitats of the park; their relative size, and their general look and feel. The plan describes feasibility tests of the design concepts. The Master Plan enables the public to imagine the future spaces and GIPEC to plan them.

The design will be further elaborated in other design phases to follow.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The Governors Island Park and Public Space Master Plan has been created with extensive input from the public. Over the past year, GIPEC and West 8 have invited input from the public in multiple forms.



SITE PLAN

LEGEND

— NPS BOUNDARY



On-Island programs, including workshops and an exhibit, gave visitors an opportunity to connect their Island experiences with the future park and public spaces, and provide feedback about what they wanted to see in these spaces. On-going public presentations and frequent blog updates created a continuing dialogue. Together, these efforts have brought thousands of voices and ideas into the design process. This dialogue will be ongoing.

PARK AND PUBLIC SPACE MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

Principles

Governors Island offers the potential of a world apart from New York City, and provides an extraordinary vantage point on New York Harbor and its icons and the chance to experience the sounds and smells of a green Island surrounded by water.

Transformation of the Island through topography is the central animating principle of the design, accomplishing the objectives of integrating the Island's two halves, creating alluring experiences and views and ensuring that the park is well designed for the future.

The design principles for the Master Plan build on the Island's unparalleled setting, including the vistas of the sea and sky, the preservation of its exceptional historical landscape, and the 360° views of the Harbor. The principles also articulate how the park and public spaces can serve as a carefree oasis for bicycling, for sports and play, for the imagination and the arts.

Sustainability and feasibility also underpin the design. The public spaces must thrive for generations in a world affected by climate change. The park design must be feasible, not only to construct, but to maintain as part of the Island's overall development.

The "Principles" section describes the Governors Island Park and Public Space Master Plan principles in more detail.

Site Plan for Governors Island park and public spaces

Site Plan and Areas

The park and public spaces of Governors Island transform the Island into a place rich with experiences and areas for visitors to enjoy.

Arriving at Soissons or Yankee Landings, visitors are greeted by free bicycles, seating, and structures that provide needed amenities and a sense of arrival. The Great Promenade encircles the entire Island, with a wide and beautiful path for bicycling, walking, lingering to enjoy views. The Historic District retains its special character, with animation of key spaces and integration with the southern half of the Island.

Walking south, the visitor arrives at the hub of the public spaces, Liggett Terrace. Seasonal flowers, play spaces, art installations and café seating draw visitors, young and old to this hub of the Island. South from Liggett Terrace, the park's topography unfolds, from the shelter of trees densely planted in Hammock Grove to the Play Lawn, with sports fields and expanses of green.

Ahead are the Hills where climbing paths reward visitors with unsurpassed views of the Harbor. The Statue of Liberty is in full view off Liberty Terrace where visitors gather to take photos or seek shelter and refreshments in the Shell. Farther south, the smells of green and sea mingle at the South Prow where the Overlook looks out on the Wetland Gardens in the foreground and the Harbor unfolding. The Site Plan provides an overview of the areas of the plan. The "Site Plan and Areas" section provides more detail.

The Way It Works

"What can I do in a park today?" The program for the Island's public spaces drives the design. The team literally mapped different visitor experiences onto the park and public spaces site to accommodate a broad range of users and their desires.

"What is a park without plants and trees?" On Governors Island the maritime conditions and varied spaces are translated into early planting

strategies that ensure that the park and public spaces offer a range of seasonal experience, incorporates native species wherever possible and lasts into the future.

"How do I get around?" The circulation plan lays out paths and roads. On Governors Island, where private automobiles are banned, careful attention is paid to the design of the free bicycle program and creating a car-free bicycling oasis.

"Where do I sit?" A master plan does not include designs for furnishings and buildings but illustrates their role, location and affect on the character of the park and public spaces. The paving, edging, and promenade railing will express the unique qualities of the place, drawing on imagery from nature and the sea. The Shell, designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, shelters visitors on the western shore while the Cube, designed by Rogers Marvel Architects, welcomes passengers disembarking at Yankee Landing. "The Way It Works" section describes all of these elements in more detail.

Implementation

The park and public spaces are the first phase of the redevelopment of Governors Island and must be considered in the context of the whole Island's site conditions as well as that of redevelopment. In that future, the public spaces will serve visitors who come to enjoy recreational amenities and views but will also serve the people who visit and work in the Island's buildings. The design has been tested with rigorous analysis of such factors as soil conditions, wind, and wave heights to ensure that the design illustrated is feasible for the Island's condition today and in the future.

The Park and Public Space Master Plan has been tested against budgets for construction and budgets for operations and maintenance. With the goal of transforming Governors Island into a destination, GIPEC set a construction budget of \$200 million and verified that the Master Plan design is on budget. The plan also outlines phases for construction and the trade-offs necessary as construction maps to budget allocations. And, just as the design was tested and modified to meet the construction budget, it was further scrutinized in the context of realistic future budgets and full-Island operations. Further detail is provided in the "Implementation" section.