

# 11TH STREET BRIDGE PROJECT: Equity implications for Anacostia

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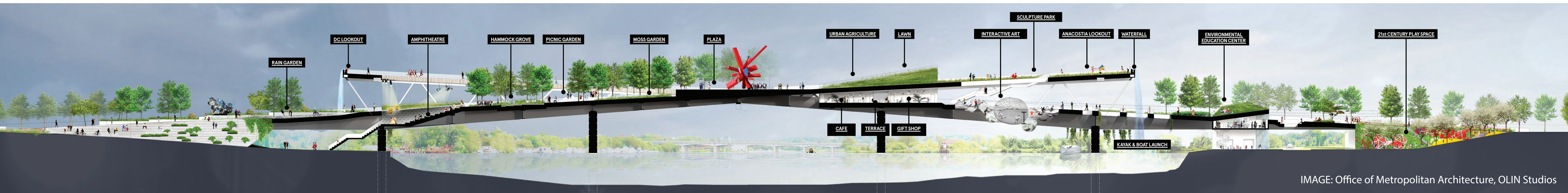


IMAGE: Office of Metropolitan Architecture, OLIN Studios

## Motivation for the Topic

In 2012, construction of the new 11th Street Bridge was completed, leaving the old piers of the original bridge unused. These piers will be the site of the 11th Street Bridge Park, an elevated park spanning the length of the bridge, connecting DC's Navy Yard to Anacostia. Concerns remain about the impact the Park will have on Anacostia, one of DC's most disenfranchised neighborhoods. Our project explores the equity implications that the Park will have on a vulnerable and changing Anacostia.

### Anacostia in Perspective:

- 92% of neighbors were African American in 2017
- Median household income, 2016: \$27,776
- Average rent, 2016: \$850

### Signs of Neighborhood Change:

- 2015, average home prices rise 26.6%
- Congress Heights saw prices rise 37%
- Of 110 homes sold in Congress Heights, 37% paid in cash

### East vs. West: Anacostia and the Navy Yard

- Home prices average \$300,000 more in Navy Yard
- Homeownership in Anacostia is 50%, versus 73%
- Unemployment in Anacostia is 3X higher

## Recommendations

- Continue involving Anacostia residents and community stakeholders in the initial planning process, but also after the park is completed to make sure they benefit from added amenities.
- Allocate land near the park for affordable housing, implement taxes on developers to be used towards securing affordable housing, and/or require developers to set aside 25% of their units for affordable housing.
- Continue building off BBAR's current equity plan, and factor equity into every step of the decision-making process.
- Coordinate the equity plan with local DC government to ensure that all citizen's rights are protected
- To effectively ensure equity, focus on moving policy. There is only so much that can be accomplished with money raised; policy will create lasting change.
- Make sure there is a requirement in developer contracts that at least 50% of those hired for construction come from the community.
- Hire employees for park programming from the Anacostia community.

## Literature Review

- Twentieth century's development without human scale.
- The "infrastructure cult" has left cities with no tools to respond to challenges beyond their design. (Marohn, 2020)
- Why is infrastructure still a priority for urban developers?
- A "new approach to infrastructure." (Lovejoy in Esty, 2019)
- Resiliency appears as a new dimension.
- Historically urban parks in the U.S. were designed with a human scale, fulfilling urban, social, environmental, and economic needs.
- In recent years, when "large parks are built in historically marginalized urban areas" as they "contribute to green gentrification" (Rigolon et al, 2019).
- There is a "need to reconceptualize twenty-first-century park systems as extensive and fundamental components of the city fabric to be integrated at multiple scales into every aspect of urban land use." (Felson in Esty, 2019)
- Being located within half a mile of a greenway park increases the likelihood that a neighborhood will gentrify by 200% (Florida, 2019).

- Many cities did not include an equity plan, affordable housing provisions, or involve community residents in the decision-making process.
- Since park nonprofits often lack the resources to adequately invest in affordable housing, they can increase a project's likelihood of sparking gentrification.

### Case Studies:

- **NYC & The High Line:** Located between two public housing projects (Elliot-Chelsea and Fulton Houses); 1/3 of Chelsea residents are low income people of color. Increased property values by 103% over an eight-year period.
- **The Atlanta Beltline:** Created intergenerational inequity by placing the project's cost burden on future Atlanta residents. Funded primarily through a Tax Allocation District (TAD). Increased property values by between 17.9 and 26.6 percent over a four year period
- **The Chicago 606 Trail:** Governed mostly by a nonprofit organization. Surrounding neighborhoods were once low income and blighted, but have now gentrified

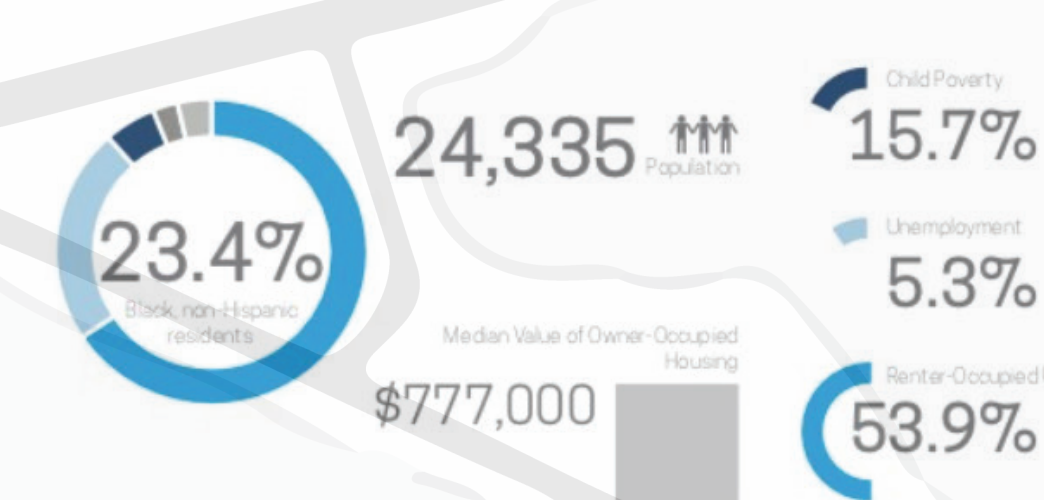
## Findings

- Estimated Project Cost= \$139 million, Raised \$114 million so far.
- "It is taking time to get the project off the ground, literally. But slow can actually be a good sign that the kind of meaningful stakeholder engagement that is required to ensure equity and accountability is actually happening." -- Professor Rebecca Yurman
- This project is practicing "community outreach over community engagement" (Kratz): the community is asked what it needs/wants, as opposed to giving input on an already planned project.
- It was important for this project to get in early and invest in the community, before home values make it difficult to meaningfully preserve space.
- Having early wins in a community that has been "planned to death" (Kratz) was essential for creating trust.
- "We are going to see a lot of turnovers soon if we are not careful so we are looking at, like, Where, where are their anti-displacement zones where is there additional on the support for, they are getting hammered by property tax increases right now that the landlord gets the property tax increase." -- Scott Kratz
- "There are really very few projects that have outside financing. Most all capital assets belong to the District of Columbia and are 100% responsible for providing the budget to rehabilitate or build new facilities in the district. To have private sector partners manage the 11th Street Bridge is a little bit unusual because there is a nonprofit entity that's managing its development."-- John McGaw
- Scott Kratz on Covid= "COVID-19 will slow down the contracting and procurement process for our next big design contracts." But even with COVID-19, the project will still be completed in 2022, as most of the meetings and presentations involved with the project have shifted online. The plan for them is to open between 2023 and 2024.
- JP Morgan Competitive Grant for \$5 million will be extended over three years. The first \$3 million was allocated toward property acquisition for interest, \$1 million went in assisting small businesses for loans & tech assistance, and \$500,000 went into Workforce Development Programming, This may be extended for an additional 6 months with COVID-19.

### East of the River

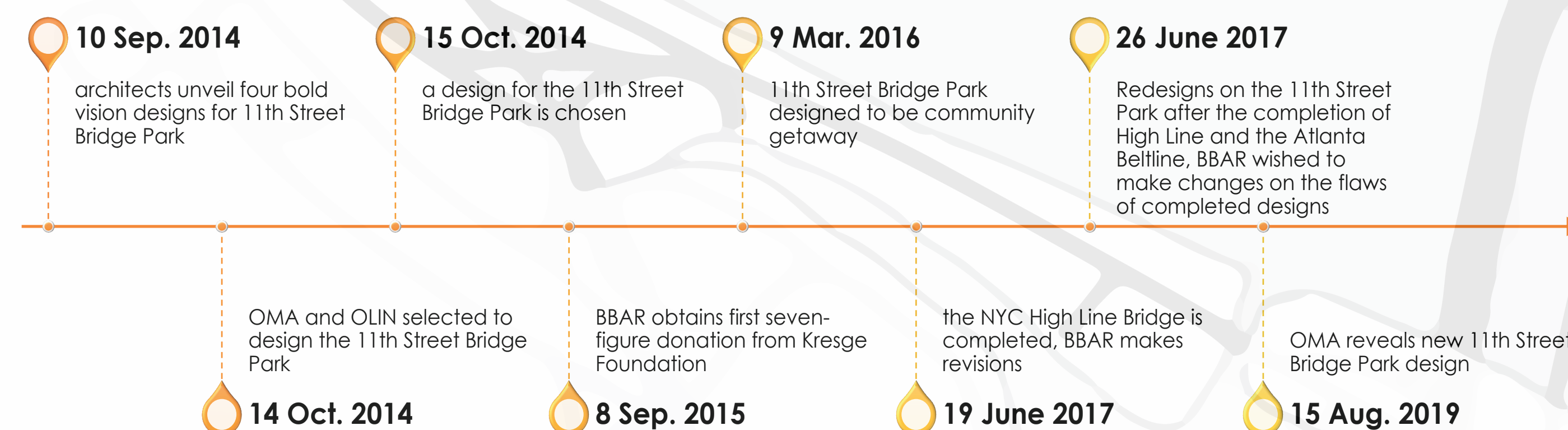


### West of the River



Source: BBAR

## Project Timeline



Source: OMA

## Methodology

- Interviewed five people involved in the projects or specialists in urban policy and public administration: Derek Hyra, American University; Judah Gluckman, American University and former Deputy Director and Counsel at the Office of Public-Private Partnerships for the D.C.; Rebecca Yurman, American University; John McGaw, former Capital Budget Director for the D.C. Government; and Scott Kratz, director of the Eleventh Street Bridge Park and Vice President at Building Bridges Across the River.
- Completed literature review on relevant urban development theories and the role infrastructure plays in urban planning.
- Analyzed three comparable urban greenspace projects.