
Prospect Park Alliance **Strategic Plan**



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The Prospect Park Alliance is a non-profit organization founded in 1987 to restore the Park after years of steady deterioration and significant decline in visitorship. This founding mission has been a great success and today Prospect Park receives more than 10 million visits each year.

The Park thrives due to a strong public-private partnership between the Alliance and the City of New York, which has evolved to the point where the Alliance provides a majority of the Park's staff and operating budget. Alliance staff includes arborists, horticulturalists and a natural resources crew that works to preserve the natural environment. In addition, the Alliance funds educators, volunteer managers, and visitor services and public program staff that engage the community, as well as architects and designers that work to restore the Park's landscapes and buildings. In December 2013, the Alliance completed the most ambitious project in its history, the 26-acre, \$74 million Lakeside project, which transformed the southeast corner of the Park into a year-round recreational amenity and scenic landscape.

Following the appointment of a new President, in May 2015 the Prospect Park Alliance commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to develop a strategic plan for the organization. Funded by the Altman Foundation, the plan assesses the organization's current state and determines its future direction given the Alliance's increasing role in the care of the Park, rapid changes in the communities surrounding the Park, exponential growth in Park visitorship, and limited and unstable public resources.

As part of the strategic planning process, PwC conducted interviews with a range of stakeholders, including staff, donors, board members, representatives from Park user and community groups, leaders of other non-profit parks and Brooklyn cultural organizations, and City officials. A survey was conducted in the Park and online, eliciting more than 5,000 responses. In addition, PwC identified best practices through research and study of other parks non-profit organizations.

Through this effort, PwC worked with the Alliance to identify its strategic position, and helped develop mission, vision, values and goals for the organization. In addition, a road map was created to guide the organization in its efforts to achieve near- and long-term objectives. The Alliance is now implementing this road map, and through this process determining the metrics for measuring the success of the plan.



Current State Findings

Through conducting a survey of more than 5,000 respondents, interviewing a range of stakeholders, and researching best practices for parks non-profits, PwC analyzed the current state of the Park and Alliance:

Park cleanliness and safety are a top priority.

A majority of park users expressed high satisfaction with the Park. While park users are diverse, many shared this top priority for the Park.

Maintenance and Operations is the area of greatest need.

The Alliance's ability to address park users' top concerns is hindered because the maintenance function falls outside its full span of control.

Awareness of the Prospect Park Alliance is low.

Most Park users are unaware of the Alliance and the role it plays in managing the Park.

Organization is lacking clear mission, vision, values and goals.

The lack of a clear organizational language stymies stakeholder understanding of what the Alliance does and seeks to achieve.



Mission, Vision, Goals + Values

From the current state findings, PwC worked with the Alliance to identify its strategic position, and develop mission, vision, goals and values language for the organization.

Mission: What does the Alliance do?

Prospect Park Alliance sustains, restores and advances Prospect Park to benefit the diverse communities we serve, in partnership with the City of New York.

Vision: What does the Alliance aspire to achieve?

Prospect Park Alliance will ensure Brooklyn's Backyard is a vital, public green space for all to enjoy. By providing the highest level of care and most innovative practices, the Alliance will lead Prospect Park to a sustainable future.

What are the Alliance's goals?

Achieve Operational Excellence: effectively and efficiently utilize resources to drive the long-term financial, social and environmental health of the organization and Park.

Engage the Community: focus the Alliance's expertise to enhance the visitor experience and involve diverse communities in the stewardship of the Park.

Advance the Park: ensure the Park is an open, accessible urban oasis that evolves to meet the community's changing needs, while honoring its stature as a national landmark.

What are the Alliance's core values?

Community: We collaborate with one another, the City and the community in the stewardship of Prospect Park so it can be sustained as a vital and accessible public amenity.

Inclusiveness: We serve Park users of all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and strive to reflect this diversity in our leadership, staff and supporters.

Innovation: We evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing city, and to advance the Park so that it remains a treasured green space for generations to come.

Leadership: We seek the highest professional standards in our work, and serve as an advocate for the Park as well as parks across the city and beyond.

Sustainability: We work to ensure the Park's long-term economic, environmental and social well being to keep the Park an enduring natural resource that contributes to Brooklyn's quality of life.

Strategic Plan: Next Steps

As part of the strategic plan process, PwC and the Alliance developed a road map to guide the organization in its efforts to achieve near- and long-term objectives, and align its work with its three overarching goals. Building upon the strategic plan, the Alliance will undertake the following activities over the next several years.

Goals Activities for Implementation

Achieve Operational Excellence

- *Finalize Mission, Vision, Goals, Values.*
- *Develop Management Plan:* define Alliance roles and responsibilities across the organization and in relationship to city agencies.
- *Develop Financial Growth Strategy:* identify areas for potential financial growth to support the organization's future needs.
- *Develop Communications Plan:* evaluate and enhance the current mechanisms for internal and external communications.
- *Develop Employee Well-Being Plan:* develop recommendations to improve employee morale, recruitment and retention.
- *Conduct Technology Assessment:* identify current and future technology needs to improve information sharing and efficiency.

Engage the Community

- *Undertake In-Depth User Study:* develop scope and key data points for a comprehensive study to better understand use and visitorship of the Park.
- *Develop Community Impact Strategy:* identify ways the Alliance can proactively partner with community organizations and Park user groups to advance its work in the Park.
- *Develop Parks Partnership Strategy:* track and assess activities to share knowledge and resources with other city parks.
- *Undertake Economic Impact Study:* determine the economic impact of the Park on surrounding neighborhoods and the City as a whole.

Advance the Park

- *Develop Comprehensive Restoration Plan:* create updated master plan for the Park that accounts for both capital improvements as well as environmental preservation efforts.

Strategic Plan: Timeline

