

RESEARCH REPORT

Equitable Development and Urban Park Space

Year 4 Progress Report on Implementation of the Equitable
Development Plan of the 11th Street Bridge Park

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Executive Summary

Washington, DC's 11th Street Bridge Park is an idea to develop an out-of-use commuter bridge into a public park that would serve as a venue for recreation, arts, and culture. From its start in 2011, the project held a second goal: to be a driver of equity in the city, particularly for Black residents in Wards 7 and 8, who have long experienced disinvestment and barriers to accessing the resources blooming in other parts of the city.

Today, the Bridge Park team is entering its fifth year of implementing the Equitable Development Plan (EDP), a strategy outlining four critical equity areas: housing, arts and culture, workforce development, and small business. The Urban Institute has undertaken a multiyear evaluation of the implementation. This overview provides insight into the Bridge Park's progress along these focus areas.

The Four Equity Focus Areas

- **Small business.** The EDP's small business focal area concentrates on supporting new and existing small businesses surrounding the Bridge Park both directly and through partnerships with economic development organizations and others.
- **Housing.** Bridge Park's housing strategy has a two-pronged approach of creating affordability and spreading information and advocacy for housing affordability. Developing affordability focuses on the creation and preservation of affordable units for long-term affordability and creating a pathway to ownership for low-income households.
- **Workforce development.** Workforce development in the EDP has strategies that focus heavily on construction jobs, with additional strategies that overlap with the cultural preservation focus area. The emphasis on construction was intended to ensure that workers in Wards 7 and 8 were trained and prepared to benefit from the development occurring in the area generally and the park's construction specifically.
- **Arts and culture.** Bridge Park's arts and culture focal area identifies the Bridge Park as a platform to celebrate the history and culture of communities on both sides of the Anacostia River and to amplify the stories, culture, and heritage of Black residents from surrounding communities, such as Barry Farm and Hillcrest. Bridge Park's arts and culture work along with its efforts to build community power are goals that cut across the EDP.

TABLE ES.1

Current Equitable Development Plan Results, January 2016 through December 2020

	Total
Housing	
<i>Ward 8 Homebuyer's Club: MANNA</i>	
Participants	786
Homes purchased by participants	88
<i>Tenants' rights: HCS</i>	
Total number of homeowner and renter properties engaged through direct mailings	35,358
Total number of homeowner and renter properties engaged through door-to-door canvassing	1,942
Total number of residents engaged through workshops held in Wards 6 and 8	567
<i>Douglass Community Land Trust (Douglass CLT)</i>	
Community member attendees to Douglass CLT education programs and events	7,265
Number of affordable units in the Douglass CLT portfolio ^a	219
PRO Neighborhoods loan capital deployed ^a	\$1,300,000
Small business development	
Total amount in loans awarded to Ward 7 and 8 small businesses using PRO Neighborhoods funds ^a	\$793,220
Ward 7 and 8 small businesses assisted by Wacif loans or technical assistance ^a	627
Workforce development	
Participants in Skyland Workforce Center's construction training program residing in Wards 6, 7, and 8 ^a	60
Participants in Skyland Workforce Center's soft-skills training program residing in Wards 6, 7, and 8 ^a	194
Skyland Workforce Center trainees placed in full-time jobs ^a	66
Skyland Workforce Center clients receiving one-on-one job search assistance, referrals to resources, or application assistance ^a	101
Arts and culture	
Total spent on local (DC metropolitan area) artists' fees for Bridge Park programming	\$82,081
Total earned by east-of-the-river vendors at annual Anacostia River Festival and Taste of the Harvest (2017-19)	\$6,867
Additional strategies	
CLEW graduates (includes first quarter of 2021 cohort)	38
CLEW train the trainer graduates	10
Families registered in Ward 8 Children's Savings Account Program	32
Families with children receiving children's savings accounts	563
Pounds of fruit and vegetables harvested on Bridge Park Plots and THEARC Farm (2015-20)	11,428

Source: 11th Street Bridge Park.

Note: CLEW = Community Leadership Empowerment Workshop; HCS = Housing Counseling Services; PRO = Partnerships for Raising Opportunity; Wacif = Washington Area Community Investment Fund.

^a Connotes work achieved primarily under the PRO Neighborhoods partnership.

Equitable Development Partnerships

Bridge Park partnerships are designed to marshal the influence, energy, and resources of residents, funders, and public and private organizations toward advancing equitable development in Wards 7 and 8. Two understandings are implicit in the collaborative efforts driven by Bridge Park leaders: (1) equity for Ward 7 and 8 residents of color is unlikely to be achieved by any one person or entity acting alone but instead requires coordinated action, and (2) each entity, such as Bridge Park, must be transparent about and accountable for how its efforts promote inclusive development.

To do the hands-on work involved in implementing the EDP's strategies, Bridge Park has established partnerships across the four focus areas. The depth of Bridge Park's partnerships is often contextual. Many Bridge Park partnerships are consistent and long-standing, while others coalesce around short-term goals. Almost all Bridge Park partnerships are fluid and ongoing. Bridge Park emphasizes partnerships with residents as a key to successfully advancing equity, stating that "by following a community-driven-vetted process, it is our hope that other cities can look to the Bridge Park as a prime example of how the public and private sectors can invest in and create world-class public space in an equitable manner." Resident relationships range from formal relationships (including those with groups such as resident councils, as well as community leaders such as advisory neighborhood commissioners or small business owners) to informal relationships (including those with parents seeking culturally appropriate education and entertainment for their families at Bridge Park events).

Power and Culture in Equity

The Bridge Park from its inception has heavily engaged with the communities surrounding the planned park. Over time, two themes emerged from this engagement: that preserving the culture of the communities surrounding the proposed park and building community power with long-term Black residents were critical to achieving equity. Bridge Park consequently invested heavily in local creators; supported and partnered with small, local businesses; and created structures that created opportunities for residents to lead. Two companion briefs dive deeper into each of these topics.

Lessons Learned for Equitable Development

The multiyear evaluation of the EDP has identified key lessons about equitable development:

1. Unify partners around common goals.

2. Search for mutually reinforcing strategies across all goal areas.
3. Seek to outpace rapid economic change.
4. Deepen and track virtual engagement to beneficial activities.
5. Develop strategies that promote power and cultural sustainability for residents of color.

Equitable Development and Urban Park Space

The vision for Washington, DC's 11th Street Bridge Park that emerged in 2011 was twofold: (1) to repurpose unused infrastructure into a 1,200-foot venue for healthy recreation, environmental education, and the arts, and (2) to position the project as a driver for connection and equity across the nation's capital, especially for its easternmost communities and adjacent Ward 8 neighborhoods, such as Anacostia, Congress Heights, and Fairlawn. The construction of the elevated public park on the piers of the decommissioned 11th Street commuter bridge over the Anacostia River has yet to begin. But Bridge Park planners, nonprofit partners, residents, underwriters, and other city stakeholders are now entering their fifth year of formal implementation the project's Equitable Development Plan (EDP).

This report is one of three publications that make up the Urban Institute's third comprehensive review of Bridge Park efforts to ensure equitable development for DC neighborhoods near the park's prospective footprint. The insights in this report were cultivated through the Urban research team's participation in partnership meetings, interviews with Bridge Park staff and organizational partners, collection of programmatic data, and interviews and focus groups with program participants.

For information on how the Bridge Park project and its EDP came to be, see our first comprehensive report, *Equitable Development Planning and Urban Park Space: Early Insights from DC's 11th Street Bridge Park Project* (Bogle, Diby, and Burnstein 2016). For an in-depth review of Bridge Park progress from 2017 to 2018, see our second report, *Equitable Development and Urban Park Space: Results and Insights from the First Two Years of Implementation of the Equitable Development Plan of DC's 11th Street Bridge Park Project* (Bogle, Diby, and Cohen 2019). This third report, its two companion briefs, and the two earlier reports can be found at <https://greaterdc.urban.org/11th-street-bridge-park-equitable-development>.

The overview below provides a high-level introduction to the park and its equitable development work, examines the partnerships that drive and sustain that work, and updates data on progress related to four focal areas for equitable development: affordable housing, small business, workforce development, and arts and culture. The two companion briefs reflect on how and why efforts to [build resident power](#) (Cohen 2021) and [achieve cultural equity](#) (Bogle and Torres Rodríguez 2021) have assumed greater importance for Bridge Park leaders and partners across all four focal areas.

History of the 11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan

Shortly after city planners fielded the concept for Washington, DC's 11th Street Bridge Park in 2011, Bridge Park organizers led more than 200 community conversations about whether residents wanted the park, what they wanted out of the park, and their hopes and concerns regarding the park's development in their neighborhoods.

In these conversations, residents who lived east of the park's prospective footprint over the Anacostia River raised concerns about the kind of attention such an attractive amenity would draw to their neighborhoods from developers and wealthy would-be home and business owners. These residents, almost all of whom are Black, understood the historic and ongoing ways that development and displacement intertwine with systemic racism. Residents of east-of-the-river communities in Wards 7 and 8 expressed hopes for enjoying the exciting new park, but fears about being displaced by higher housing and other costs were equally prevalent. In response, Bridge Park planners commissioned an economic impact study that delineated some of the economic benefits the park would bring to surrounding neighborhoods and the city overall. The study, though, said nothing about the composition of residents who would enjoy these new benefits, much less about how park developers could ensure that current neighborhood residents would benefit from the new jobs and small business opportunities the new public space would likely generate.

Recognizing the legitimacy of current community members' concerns, Bridge Park planners convened an Equitable Development Task Force in 2013 to work with residents and other stakeholders to produce the 11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan (BBAR 2018), which lays out strategies for affordable housing, small business, workforce development, and arts and culture. The EDP's stated goal is to ensure the park drives inclusive development—that is, development that provides opportunities for all residents, regardless of income and demographic characteristics. The plan's first iteration was released in 2015, and after additional community convenings in 2016 and 2017, a second iteration was released during the summer of 2017. Bridge Park leaders implemented elements of the plan throughout the planning process. And thanks in large part to the award of a JPMorgan Chase Partnerships for Raising Opportunity (PRO) Neighborhoods grant, Bridge Park leaders and their partners began full implementation of the plan in 2017.

From 2018 to 2019, Bridge Park leaders made significant progress on strategies aimed at affordable housing and arts and culture. Though steady, progress on harnessing job and small business opportunities has been less robust than anticipated because of changes in the park's construction timeline and the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the strategies to include local residents in construction work and vending on the park have not yet occurred. As of the release of the first EDP, the park was slated to open in 2019, but two years into the EDP's implementation, the timeline was pushed back to 2023. Recently, park leaders announced the park would not open until 2024 because of delays related to District contract and procurement processes.

In 2020, the pandemic added substantial new barriers to achieving strategies across all four Bridge Park focal areas, while making their attainment more critical than ever. For example, in-person events, critical to the culture and power-building work, have struggled with the transition to an online-only environment. Workforce and small business work turned quickly to rapid response to help workers and businesses stay afloat, and the distribution of affordable housing resources from the city, such as the Housing Production Trust Fund, experienced significant delays. These challenges are among many priorities that have had to evolve during the pandemic.

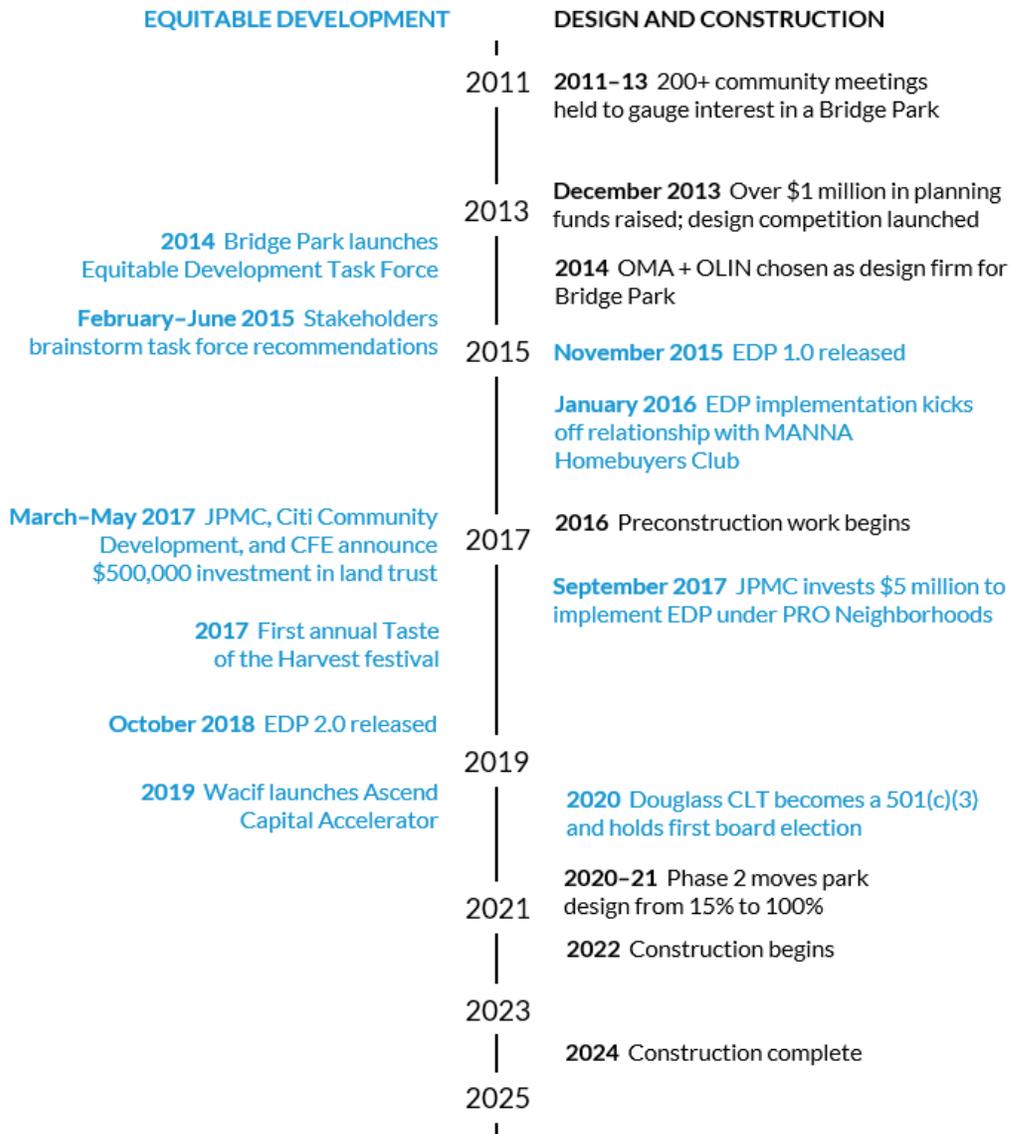
There may be a small silver lining to these delays, however. As we noted in our first report, real estate markets in "hot" locations such as the Bay Area and New York City have often outpaced attempts to build equity into development projects focused on public space. Especially in light of some of the EDP innovations Bridge Park leaders have mounted in response to the pandemic, which we document below, the longer timeline may offer them more time to hone their strategies and improve their results before the Bridge Park's added economic impact is felt. At the same time, the pandemic has worsened many of the disparities that the EDP is a response to.

To best expand its work, the Bridge Park team will need to understand the broader development landscape in Ward 8 and identify target impact for the Bridge Park's effects. The EDP metrics we discuss below and early estimates of economic impact that the Urban Institute developed start to show the EDP's direct effects. This impact should be compared with the scale of the need. Other large-scale developments are also planned for Ward 8, and gentrification is starting to occur even before construction begins on the Bridge Park.

These challenges should not prevent the Bridge Park from attempting to offset its share of the development pressures. As the park comes to fruition, analysis of the Bridge Park's effects on development will become more plausible. When that occurs, it is imperative that this impact be

compared with EDP outcomes to ensure the Bridge Park produces equity rather than gentrification and displacement.

FIGURE 1
 Bridge Park Timeline



Source: Bridge Park.

Note: CFE = City First Enterprises; CLT = community land trust; EDP = Equitable Development Plan; JPMC = JPMorgan Chase; PRO = Partnerships for Raising Opportunity; Wacif = Washington Area Community Investment Fund.

Bridge Park Partnerships

Bridge Park partnerships are designed to marshal the influence, energy, and resources of residents, funders, and public and private organizations toward advancing equitable development in Wards 7 and 8. Two understandings are implicit in the collaborative efforts driven by Bridge Park leaders: (1) equity for Ward 7 and 8 residents of color is unlikely to be achieved by any one person or entity acting alone but instead requires coordinated action, and (2) each entity, such as Bridge Park, must be transparent about and accountable for how its efforts promote inclusive development.

Much can be learned about Bridge Park’s approach to partnerships by looking at its seven-year relationship with the organization Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR), which manages the nationally recognized Ward 8–based Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC), a \$60 million, 16.5-acre property that features performing arts facilities and galleries, a large urban farm, and 14 resident partners, such as schools, health care providers, and other service providers focused on recreation, the arts, workforce development, and environmental inquiry. In 2014, Scott Kratz, the founder of Bridge Park, approached Building Bridges leaders about including the project under its organizational umbrella. At the time, all parties recognized that the Bridge Park idea offered both symbolic and practical alignment with the Building Bridges mission to “bridge” DC from the east to the west of the Anacostia River.

In the first few years, Building Bridges was largely a fiscal agent and office-space provider to Bridge Park. Over time, however, the relationship became more seamless, with each entity learning from the other about what level of investment in the people—not simply bricks and mortar—of Wards 7 and 8 would be required to close long-standing disparities between the District’s Black and white residents, especially in neighborhoods where residents have long experienced discrimination and disinvestment. Bridge Park has since been incorporated into the Building Bridges organization, and Kratz is a vice president of Building Bridges. Many Building Bridges projects (e.g., the Skyland Workforce Center and BBAR Farms) and THEARC campus are deeply connected with the Bridge Park project. This consolidation has allowed all Building Bridges staff, including the Bridge Park team, to avoid creating redundant programming and to focus on seeking residents or indigenous organizations to lead the advancement on the economic and social prospects of longtime residents.

Partnerships with Longtime Residents

Bridge Park emphasizes partnerships with residents as a key to successfully advancing equity, stating that “by following a community-driven-vetted process, it is our hope that other cities can look to the Bridge Park as a prime example of how the public and private sectors can invest in and create world-class public space in an equitable manner.”¹ Resident relationships range from formal relationships (including those with groups such as resident councils, and community leaders like advisory neighborhood commissioners or small business owners) to informal relationships (including those with parents seeking culturally appropriate education and entertainment for their families at Bridge Park events).

Bridge Park leaders, some of whom live in Ward 8, center their partner-building attention on longtime Black residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. One of the companion briefs, “Building Community Power for Equity” (Cohen 2021), details Bridge Park’s evolution and expansion of its community engagement. The brief focuses on Bridge Park efforts to build space and capacity for community leadership.

Funding Partners

Bridge Park leaders have secured more than \$77.5 million to invest directly in the park’s surrounding neighborhoods through their equitable development strategies. In addition, they have amassed nearly \$59 million in a capital campaign to build the 11th Street Bridge Park.

Funding from Bridge Park’s earliest foundation partners—The Kresge Foundation, The JPB Foundation, the Educational Foundation of America, and ArtPlace America—helped Bridge Park develop the EDP, especially components focused on arts and culture in Ward 7 and 8 communities. In addition, as detailed in Urban’s first report on Bridge Park’s EDP, LISC DC’s early and ongoing investments, guidance, and expertise have been critical to the development of Bridge Park’s EDP.

In 2020, Bridge Park listed 12 major funders—defined here as having contributed at least \$25,000—for its equitable development work, including The Kresge Foundation and LISC DC, who have continued to support Bridge Park’s efforts since 2015. Others include the A. James and Alice B. Clark Foundation, Citi Foundation, Target, TD Bank, the Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States Office, Bloomberg, the Meyer Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, the Lois and Richard England Family

Foundation, and Doris Matsui and Roger W. Sant. In addition, more than 100 funders and individual donors have contributed at levels ranging from \$10 to \$24,999.

Organizational Partners

To do the hands-on work involved in implementing the EDP's strategies, Bridge Park has established organizational partnerships across the four focal areas of housing, workforce development, small business, and arts and culture. The depth of Bridge Park's partnerships is often contextual. Many Bridge Park partnerships are consistent and long-standing, while others coalesce around short-term goals.

Almost all Bridge Park partnerships are fluid and ongoing. For instance, Bridge Park has built a connection to the Anacostia Business Improvement District (BID) over multiple years, with a standing goal to advance the growth of locally owned businesses through joint mechanisms such as hosting small business town halls. The pandemic forced a shift in the partnership to help small businesses secure Paycheck Protection Program funding to weather the crisis's economic shocks. That rapid shift to address circumstances was enabled by their preexisting relationship.

Many local nonprofits and city officials participate in biannual meetings of the Equitable Development Plan Advisory Committee, which Bridge Park established in 2017 to succeed the Equitable Development Task Force in guiding and providing feedback on EDP implementation.

Multisector Partnerships

Although many of its partnerships are one-on-one, Bridge Park occasionally enters formal multisector partnerships with existing or new partner organizations to address funding opportunities or circumstances.

Elevating Equity

LISC DC's Elevating Equity initiative is a multisector partnership the Bridge Park joined, rather than drove. Back in 2015, Bridge Park's early EDP efforts helped spark this \$50 million investment in nonprofit projects, programs, and activities to support affordable housing, early childhood education, medical treatment, food support, arts education, and other needs of residents of color who live in neighborhoods surrounding the prospective Bridge Park footprint. In turn, Bridge Park's affordable

housing work in Ward 8 received a significant head start from LISC DC's work. Though Bridge Park leaders cannot directly claim Elevating Equity results as their own, the impact of entities striking collaborative relationships to achieve common ends is clear.

The PRO Neighborhoods Partnership

In 2017, the Bridge Park received a significant boost to its equitable development activities from its largest funding partner, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, in the form of a \$5 million grant under the foundation's PRO Neighborhoods initiative. The three-year grant, which was extended to the end of 2021, funded Bridge Park and three of its key implementation partners—City First Enterprises, the Washington Area Community Investment Fund (Wacif), and Skyland Workforce Center—to form a PRO Neighborhoods partnership. The PRO Neighborhoods grant covered \$3 million to stand up the Douglass Community Land Trust (Douglass CLT) in collaboration with City First Enterprises and \$1 million in capital for minority-owned small businesses in collaboration with Wacif, a DC-based community development investment fund. The remainder has funded workforce development activities led by Skyland Workforce Center, also a BBAR project, and research from the Urban Institute.

The PRO Neighborhoods partnership was conceived to be cross-sectoral, not only to add depth to each of the EDP's three focus areas in turn (the fourth, arts and culture, was functionally a key aspect of Bridge Park work but was only formally added to the EDP in the 2017 update) but to leverage potential synergies across the focus areas.

The alliances Bridge Park forged with its PRO Neighborhoods partners has significantly affected many EDP strategies. For example, Bridge Park staff used the partnership to support the creation of the Douglass CLT, connecting its early leaders to experienced land trust consultants. In addition, the Bridge Park's role as convener amplifies each organization's work and their view of the bigger equity picture. Internally coordinated monthly updates helped partners better understand work occurring in other EDP focus areas and externally increased the visibility of such efforts as Wacif's small business capacity-building work in east-of-the-river communities. One housing-related partner spoke enthusiastically of PRO Neighborhoods interactions as "a way to provide formal partnerships for members across different organizations. Displacement is affecting small businesses as well (not just a housing problem). Arts and culture tries to keep a sense of place. It was very useful to sit together and have all of those elements represented, each of these other pieces reinforcing the housing work."

Though all partners acknowledge the importance of PRO Neighborhoods support for advancing their work within the focal areas most relevant to their highly specialized areas of expertise, a few

partners said they could not identify any concrete examples of active and long-lasting cross-sectoral programming or shared activities among the partners, despite the aspiration stated in the PRO Neighborhoods grant application “to intentionally integrate our programs, eliminating silos that often inhibit equitable development.” In other words, though regular meetings and communication provided opportunities for greater information sharing, a few partners thought that these engagements did not produce cross-silo results.

There are several potential explanations for why the partners’ work remained siloed. Each partner organization was in a slightly different organizational stage. The Douglass CLT was establishing itself as a separate organization from City First Enterprises, Skyland was a relatively new project in the BBAR umbrella, and Wacif was a well-established community development financial institution. These different organizational states meant they were not often in a position to offer direct support to each other.

Perhaps more critically, much of their planned collaboration had been centered on Bridge Park construction and programming. The partners anticipated a natural symbiosis between workforce construction trainees who might go on to work for small contractors working on construction and implementation subcontracts and affordable rentals preserved and created for these workers. Because of construction delays, a central connecting project did not emerge.

Nevertheless, partners anticipate the experience of collaboration gained over the past three years would be beneficial to getting an early start on deeper collaboration once park construction begins. One PRO Neighborhoods partner leader, who did not believe all the meeting time required under the partnership had created cross-silo interactions, said it was important for equity to be elevated before construction begins and that the delay “has allowed for more collaboration and having more complex equitable development conversations.”

The Insights for the Field section below will suggest a few places where the nascent connections among PRO Neighborhoods partners might emerge as powerful points of connection in the years ahead.

Bridge Park's Equitable Development Results

The EDP has yielded a wide range of results over five years. A deeper analysis of the outcomes from 2017 to 2018 can be found in our interim report. Here, we provide a short summary of the metrics from 2016 to 2020, followed by a deeper exploration of results produced in 2019 and 2020.

A Four-Year Summary of Results

Over the first four years of EDP implementation, Bridge Park efforts—either direct efforts or efforts produced via key partners—can be credited with the results displayed in table 1. Highlights include the 88 homes purchased by DC residents with low to moderate incomes, 219 units added to the Douglass CLT portfolio, \$793,220 in small business loans issued, 627 small businesses assisted, and \$82,081 spent by BBAR on artists' fees for Bridge Park programs and events that support arts and culture produced by residents in Wards 7 and 8.

TABLE 1

Current Equitable Development Plan Results, January 2016 through December 2020

	Total
Housing	
<i>Ward 8 Homebuyer's Club: MANNA</i>	
Participants	786
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Source: 11th Street Bridge Park.

Note: CLEW = Community Leadership Empowerment Workshop; HCS = Housing Counseling Services; PRO = Partnerships for Raising Opportunity; Wacif = Washington Area Community Investment Fund.

^a Connotes work achieved primarily under the PRO Neighborhoods partnership.

Bridge Park EDP Results in 2019 and 2020

Despite significant pandemic-related challenges and delays in park construction, Bridge Park leaders and their partners have achieved a great deal of progress over the past two years. What follows is a detailed summary of results under the housing, workforce development, small business, and arts and culture focal areas of the EDP in 2019 and 2020.

Housing

Bridge Park's housing strategy has a two-pronged approach of creating affordability and spreading information and advocacy for housing affordability. Developing affordability focuses on the creation and preservation of affordable units for long-term affordability and creating a pathway to ownership for low-income households. Its primary partners in this work are the Douglass CLT and MANNA. Its work to inform residents about affordability opportunities is led by Housing Counseling Services. The EDP housing strategies are as follows:

- Strategy 1. Housing information
- Strategy 2. Affordable housing
- Strategy 3. Housing partnerships and advocacy

STRATEGY 1. HOUSING INFORMATION

The Bridge Park team identified two main strategies for disseminating housing information: the Ward 8 Homebuyer's Club operated by MANNA and the Know Your Rights tenant mailings and trainings led by Housing Counseling Services. In 2019 and 2020, the Know Your Rights work was paused. The Bridge Park team is seeking additional ways to partner with Housing Counseling Services in 2021.

The large share of the work under this strategy has occurred through the Ward 8 Homebuyers Club, which hosted 11 trainings in 2019 and 14 in 2020. MANNA continued providing the workshops during the pandemic by moving to virtual workshops. The number of participants able to access homeownership has fallen over the past three years: 15 in 2018, 10 in 2019, and 5 in 2020. The more recent drop can be directly attributed to the financial strain caused by the pandemic. But MANNA and the Bridge Park team note an overarching struggle to find affordable homeownership opportunities in the District, particularly in Wards 7 and 8. Recently, the Bridge Park and MANNA have connected with another large-scale development project, the redevelopment of St. Elizabeth's Campus, to directly provide affordable homeownership opportunities for homebuyer's club graduates.

STRATEGY 2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Creating, structuring, and expanding the Douglass CLT has been at the forefront of Bridge Park's affordable housing strategy. The organization originally was housed within City First Enterprises. In 2018, the organization brought on Ginger Rumph as its first executive director. The following year, the organization developed integral pieces, including drafting by-laws and articles of incorporation. In 2020, the organization officially became a separate entity, obtaining nonprofit 501(c)(3) status. The Douglass CLT also formalized its board structure, which includes designated community representatives. The Douglass CLT elected its first board in 2020 and recently went through its second round of elections.

Douglass CLT's focus on community-driven decisionmaking means that community outreach and base building are key elements of its work. As such, in 2019, Douglass CLT held, cohosted, or presented at more than two dozen outreach and engagement events reaching more than 1,000 local residents. These events ranged from orientations at prospective land trust buildings to informational sessions at community events.

The Douglass CLT has made sustained progress on its internal foundation and its external outreach, but progress on incorporating new properties has been slow. Although 219 units have been incorporated into the Douglass CLT, only 65 units are newly preserved; the rest are units passed from the City First Enterprises portfolio. The past year included significant hurdles to affordable housing development and preservation, which likely helps explain the slow start. First, the Douglass CLT spent much of 2019 developing its organizational structure and becoming a separate legal entity. This extended to external education with local stakeholders about the land trust model and developing internal practices that aligned with existing affordable housing regulations and practices. The pandemic introduced several challenges and competing priorities. The Douglass CLT shifted toward supporting members who had been affected by the pandemic, including mutual aid and food distribution. The team also helped connect residents with emergency rental assistance. Additionally, the Housing Production Trust Fund, the primary source for funding affordable housing in DC, experienced a slowdown because of the pandemic.

Despite these challenges, the Douglass CLT finalized the preservation of the Savannah Apartments in Ward 8, preserving 65 affordable units with a 99-year ground lease. As of the end of 2020, there were 337 units in the Douglass CLT pipeline. Even though those numbers offer only a snapshot of the affordability pipeline, they do indicate that the Douglass CLT has several possible expansions to its portfolio of units.

STRATEGY 3. HOUSING PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Much of the Bridge Park’s efforts around housing have centered on the first two strategies. The Douglass CLT has been heavily engaged in policy conversations, including offering testimony and engaging in advocacy around a proposed land trust bill in the DC Council. The Bridge Park team has supported this work but has not taken on a direct advocacy role. The Bridge Park Community Leadership Empowerment Workshop, which eventually became a broad community power-building workshop, was initially envisioned to help members of the land trust advisory council better understand and advocate for the land trust.

Workforce Development

Workforce development in the EDP has strategies that focus heavily on construction jobs, with additional strategies that overlap with the cultural preservation focus area. The emphasis on construction was intended to ensure that workers in Wards 7 and 8 were trained and prepared to benefit from the development occurring in the area generally, and the park’s construction specifically. The delay in the park’s construction has meant the focus has been more heavily on training than connection to specific workforce opportunities connected with construction. Bridge Park has engaged cultural creators by funding large-scale cultural events and individual artists. The workforce strategies are outlined below:

- Strategy 1. Construction jobs
- Strategy 2. Postconstruction jobs
- Strategy 3. Equitable distribution of funding and programming
- Strategy 4. Build capacity of local artists

STRATEGIES 1 AND 2. CONSTRUCTION JOBS

The EDP’s first two workforce strategies are structured around construction jobs. As construction has not yet occurred, we have combined the discussion of strategies 1 and 2. Skyland Workforce Center has continued providing construction training to residents in Wards 6, 7, and 8. Over the past two years, 143 residents have completed either the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s OSHA-10 or OSHA-30 safety trainings (10 and 30 hours, respectively) that are required for workers and supervisors in the construction industry. Of that group, 124 are based in Wards 7 and 8.

In 2019 and 2020, 35 workforce training program graduates obtained full-time employment, and 29 of them were placed in construction jobs. The pandemic forced Skyland to postpone most of its training sessions in 2020 and 2021 because courses are difficult to present online. Skyland is building its process for collecting outcome data on graduates from the training program. It relies on graduates to report back when they have obtained employment, so the metrics on graduates who have obtained employment may be an undercount (there also may be gaps in the data on graduates who have moved on from their employment).

STRATEGY 3. EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING

As the arts and culture section below describes, Bridge Park supported cultural events, artists, and artistic production. This strategy was intended to focus on Bridge Park's advocacy to other arts and cultural institutions to improve the equitable distribution of funding. This has taken place largely through Bridge Park's partnership with local culturally focused small businesses and partnerships with art organizations.

STRATEGY 4. BUILD CAPACITY OF LOCAL ARTISTS

Aligned with a similar strategy in arts and culture, Bridge Park supported local artists' programming. This has been done largely through its cultural programming, providing platforms through festivals and events, working with theater productions to put on plays, and similar initiatives. It has also developed the pipeline of young artists through the iCAN technical theater partnership. This program provides internship opportunities for young people in Wards 6, 7, and 8 to learn technical skills in the arts, including lighting, audio engineering, and stage management.

Small Business

The EDP's small business focal area concentrates on supporting new and existing small businesses surrounding the Bridge Park both directly and through partnerships with economic development organizations and others.

Bridge Park has three key strategies that guide its small business work:

- Strategy 1. Businesses at the park
- Strategy 2. Businesses surrounding the park
- Strategy 3. Connection

To date, the dominant activities across all three small business strategies have been lending and technical assistance focused on capacity building for current and future entrepreneurs. Lending activity has been significantly curtailed because of the pandemic’s economic effects, which has hampered the growth of many small businesses, both in disinvested neighborhoods and across the nation. In 2019 and 2020, Bridge Park’s primary partners in its work to sustain and build up locally owned small businesses have been Wacif and the Anacostia BID.

STRATEGIES 1 AND 2. BUSINESSES AT AND SURROUNDING THE PARK

EDP activities aimed at building a network of small businesses that operate on the Bridge Park following construction focus on establishing kiosks for and offering contracting opportunities on the bridge to existing and new small businesses from the surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, results for this objective will remain dormant until the park is built.

Over the past two years, Bridge Park efforts to sustain and build up small businesses surrounding the park’s prospective footprint have centered on EDP activities such as “building and sustaining a community of small businesses, arts organizations, and creative entrepreneurs through mentorship, entrepreneurial training, and partnerships” and on developing partnerships that “create new affordable/flexible/multi-use work, performance and presentation spaces for local creative entrepreneurs in the Bridge Park’s surrounding neighborhoods” (BBAR 2018). Efforts focused on these activities were so robust last year that, of the 627 people served over the four years of EDP implementation, 446 of them (or 71 percent) were served in 2020.

Bridge Park staff formed alliances with creative entrepreneurs in Wards 7 and 8 over the past two years. The partnership with Nubian Hueman, a Ward 8–based boutique that bills itself as “your destination for stylish cultural goods—home, family, and you. All of your favorite Black-owned & Brown-owned brands in one place.” The owner of Nubian Hueman has curated the Black Love Experience, a convening of Black creators of music, art, wellness initiatives, and creative commerce for the past three years. In 2019, the event attracted 1,378 attendees. In 2018 and 2019, Bridge Park supported the event by providing BBAR’s paid iCAN interns to provide back-of-house technical support. In 2020, the event went virtual on account of the pandemic.

A cornerstone of Bridge Park’s capacity-building work over the past two years has been Wacif’s Ascend Capital Accelerator East, which began in 2019 and focuses on building up the small business opportunities and acumen for Black “legacy” residents who have long resided east of the river. The Wacif Ascend Capital Accelerator is a citywide 12-week asset-based development program that provides small and midsized businesses financial and management training. The full range of services

include industry-specific technical assistance, access to professional services, networking opportunities, access to affordable loan capital, exposure to government contracting and procurement opportunities, and guidance to gain and leverage benefits within the District's Certified Business Enterprise designation and the federal government's Minority, Women-Owned, or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise designations.

Bridge Park's response to the pandemic's impact on small businesses has been timely and robust. In partnership with the Anacostia BID and using funds raised from Target, Bridge Park offered pro bono accounting services to help small businesses apply for emergency assistance programs (e.g., the federal Paycheck Protection Program) and develop multiyear financial statements to determine a sustainable path forward.

In response to the pandemic, Bridge Park reallocated dollars from JPMorgan Chase to bolster local businesses through the difficult summer and fall of 2020. Bridge Park purchased products like soy candles from Nubian Hueman, cold-pressed juices from Ward 7's Fight Juice, and "Plumbo" sauce from Ward 8's Plum Good to include in grocery bags distributed at BBAR's summer and fall Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) markets. Bridge Park staff also mounted a digital marketing campaign in conjunction with the CSA product giveaways to promote these businesses to boost Ward 8 small business sales and visibility. Lastly, in October, Bridge Park helped cover equipment and marketing costs for a DC Black Business Pop-Up Shop organized by an east-of-the-river entrepreneur. The outdoor event featured Black clothing, art, book, food, and jewelry vendors. The pop-up was limited to 100 shoppers and admitted 33 at a time with one hour to shop (masks required) to adhere to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

The owner of Nubian Hueman said, "Support from Bridge Park to me as a business this year has made a hell of a difference.... Had it not been for [BBAR and JPMC] funds, Nubian Hueman would be close to going under. They funded us before even COVID-19 hit. That type of support is paramount; they have advocated in a way that have brought new funds and relationships into my ecosystem."

Though the pace was significantly slowed by the pandemic, lending to businesses has also been a significant activity under strategy 2. From 2018 to 2020, Wacif initiated 21 loans to small businesses, 13 of them in 2018. In addition to direct loans, it provided technical assistance, accounting help, and other business supports. More than 98 percent of people assisted through Wacif programming were from Wards 7 and 8, and more than 90 percent were people of color. More than 90 percent of all people assisted between 2018 and 2020 were from Wards 7 and 8, and all 446 people assisted in 2020 were

from Wards 7 and 8. Similarly, more than 90 percent of the people assisted between 2018 and 2020 identified as people of color, including 90 percent of the 446 people assisted in 2020.

But the slowdowns in lending activity caused by the pandemic and other factors are evident in table 2, which juxtaposes small business lending results for 2018 against progress made in 2019 and 2020.

TABLE 2

Lending to Small Businesses through the Equitable Development Plan

Results from 2018 through 2020

	Dollar amount or total
Loans given to small businesses	
2018	\$525,000
2019	\$5,800
2020	\$257,420
Loans given to small businesses	
2018	13
2019	1
2020	6

STRATEGY 3. CONNECTION

The EDP’s small business “connection” strategy focuses on ensuring that the Bridge Park is deeply connected to business corridors on both sides of the Anacostia River, thereby serving as a platform and an amplifier for the local businesses surrounding the park’s prospective footprint. In 2018 and 2019, Bridge Park used funding from The Kresge Foundation to operate an artists’ market set up on the nearby Good Hope Road business corridor in Ward 8. The artists’ market in 2017 generated \$4,165 in revenue for artists and in 2019 generated \$2,582, which is another large result Bridge Park can take some indirect credit for. In 2019 and 2020, Bridge Park and the Anacostia BID worked on plans to strengthen connectivity between the festival and artists’ market to the retail and food merchants along both the Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue business corridors in Anacostia. The pandemic canceled the 2020 festival, though, and quashed those plans. The BID and Bridge Park had also planned to host three town halls for small business owners in 2020 to discuss their needs. Funds from Target had been designated to underwrite these efforts, but those funds were reallocated so that the BID and Bridge Park could jointly address the more urgent small business needs caused by the pandemic.

Arts and Culture

Bridge Park’s “arts and culture” focal area identifies the Bridge Park as a platform to celebrate the history and culture of communities on both sides of the Anacostia River and to amplify the stories, culture, and heritage of Black residents from surrounding communities such as Barry Farm and Hillcrest. There is significant overlap between arts and culture results and those attributable to the EDP’s small business strategies. Though arts and culture was not a focal area in the original 2015 version of the EDP, many of the activities aimed at lifting up Ward 8 culture were recognized by community leaders as relating to the park’s economic inclusion goals. Irfana Noorani, the former deputy director of the Bridge Park project, recalls funding partners saying, “Hey, we are looking at these economic strategies you guys are doing, [and] we are seeing all of this programming work you are doing [such as the Anacostia River Festival].... There is a place for culture to sit at the same spot as the economic piece is.” In response to these observations, Bridge Park leaders increasingly focused on bringing artists and other culture-focused entrepreneurs together to discuss the role of equity in Bridge Park and BBAR arts and culture initiatives. By the 2017 update to the EDP, many of the activities attached to the small business focal area were related to arts and culture, and arts and culture was formally installed as the EDP’s fourth focal area.

The Bridge Park team has four key strategies that guide its arts and culture work:

- Strategy 1. Information hub
- Strategy 2. Accessibility
- Strategy 3. Space
- Strategy 4. Build capacity of local artists

Many of Bridge Park’s activities related to these strategies center around performing arts, culturally relevant food, and the activities of entrepreneurs who are artists or culture keepers. Several large recurring events sponsored by Bridge Park cut across all four strategies areas:

- The annual spring **Anacostia River Festival**, which Bridge Park cosponsors with the National Park Service, typically features a wide array of cross-cultural activities, such as outdoor games, exploration of riverfront trails, informational booths on conservation and clean water, and hand dancing and go-go music performances. Bridge Park began assisting with the festival’s production in 2015.
- The annual fall **Taste of the Harvest** festival is an extension and culmination of the BBAR’s CSA programs and THEARC programming. BBAR CSA programs include BBAR Farms and seasonal

farmers' markets. Bridge Park itself underwrites six "Bridge Park Plots," which are tilled by urban farmers in Wards 6 and 8. Since 2017, the harvest festival has offered family and community activities, live performances, and dishes cooked with produce delivered by the affiliated farmers. In 2020, the festival and its offerings were adapted to a virtual platform because of the pandemic.

In addition to these signature recurring events in 2019 and 2020, Bridge Park and BBAR also produced a large one-time performance of *Old Boy* in partnership with a Ward 8 creator.

STRATEGY 1. INFORMATION HUB

The information hub strategy was initially meant to occur at a physical bulletin board at the newly constructed park. But centralizing and disseminating resources for residents surrounding the Bridge Park's footprint has been implemented even before the park's construction is finalized. For example, both the Anacostia River Festival and Taste of the Harvest were widely advertised in neighborhoods close to the prospective Bridge Park footprint in 2019 and 2020.

In 2020, the virtual bulletin board was brought to life. During the virtual 2020 Taste of the Harvest festival, frequent posting of free, accessible, and engaging content—especially related to mental and physical well-being amid the pandemic—created a central community space for community members to hear about and participate in virtual and hybrid activities. The overall transition toward a virtual information hub was facilitated by the hiring of a new social media director, who produced engaging graphics, short video content, and weekly email newsletters to approximately 8,000 subscribers.

STRATEGY 2. ACCESSIBILITY

Both the Anacostia River Festival and Taste of the Harvest are free and open to the public. All programming funded and organized by Bridge Park is free of charge. For events where Bridge Park pays and supports local artists to lead, such as THEARC Theater productions, Bridge Park subsidized up to 75 percent of the ticket prices for local residents.

Bridge Park supported local artisans by buying their products and including them in the BBAR CSA monthly food drop-offs to neighboring residents. The CSA bags of produce, groceries, and products were distributed directly to neighboring families, provided free of charge to families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits, and delivered in a socially distanced manner.

Table 3 displays Bridge Park arts and culture attendance results by offering. The river festival scheduled for April 2020 was canceled because of the pandemic, which is why attendance for that event dropped to zero.

TABLE 3
Event Attendance, 2018 through 2020

	Attendees
Signature recurring events	
2019 Anacostia River Festival	7,000
2020 Anacostia River Festival	0 ^a
2019 Taste of the Harvest	464
2020 Taste of the Harvest	1,009 ^b
One-time events	
2019 performance of <i>Old Boy</i>	60
2020 volunteer fair; progress update town hall	435 ^c
2020 Kids Wellness Week	1,577 ^c
2020 community conversation: Defund the police	939 ^c
2020 Cook'n with Chef (three-part series)	737 ^c
2020 Collard Greens	227 ^c

^aEvent canceled.

^bVirtual event; total attendees across five sessions.

^cVirtual event; total count of Facebook streams.

To gauge the EDP-related impact of its arts and culture programming on residents from surrounding neighborhoods, Bridge Park attempted to tally attendance at the 2019 Taste of the Harvest festival. Of the 464 attendees at the 2019 festival, 51 people were surveyed and 36 were from the Bridge Park’s surrounding neighborhoods. Though overall attendance could be counted for Bridge Park’s virtual programs offered during the pandemic, the location of attendees could not be discerned via Facebook streaming, the platform used for all online events.

Because Taste of the Harvest was scheduled for later in the pandemic, Bridge Park leaders and their creative partners had time to address accessibility challenges that the potential for spreading COVID-19 posed to this and all large in-person gatherings in 2020. With support from The Kresge Foundation, the event moved online, and attendance was more than double the 2019 tally. Unfortunately, it is hard to assess the number of attendees from surrounding neighborhoods because mechanisms to pinpoint the location of virtual attendees were not used. The festival’s virtual format included five separate free webinars streamed on Facebook, YouTube, and on the website:

- Eat Well, Be Well: Panelists included JJ, manager of the BBAR farms; Veda, a vegan chef and farmer; Somaria, a naturalist and pescatarian; and Ronnie, president and CEO of the Green Scheme²

- Food Makers Hustle Panel: Panelists included food entrepreneurs and Black-owned small business owners such as Tamara Cole, CEO of Wilma’s Batter; Xavier Brown, CEO of Soulful City; and Ivy Armstrong, CEO of Fight Juice³
- Cooking with Chef Jordan: Facilitated by plant-based chef Jordan, CEO of Eats by Jo, and the BBAR Farms team⁴
- Pumpkin Painting: Facilitated by Anais Lugo from Project Create; provided pumpkins and paint kits for community pickup at THEARC⁵
- Food Stories from the Soul: Facilitated by John Johnson and the Soul Play Back Theater Troupe⁶

Surprisingly, artists, entrepreneurs, and local community members often made powerful connections despite the virtual formats. For example, during the “Food Stories from the Soul” workshop at Taste of the Harvest, older adults were asked about early memories with food and family, which the aptly named Playback Theater troupe acted and sang back to them. These reenactments honored residents’ life stories, evoking powerful emotions in their healing exploration of the often-deep relationship between food, culture, and personal history.

Bridge Park also hosted special nonrecurring events in 2020 that addressed the deep wounds of that year—not only the high rate of COVID-19 infection and mortality experienced by majority-Black communities like Ward 8 but also by George Floyd’s murder. For example, a virtual community conversation titled “Defund the Police” received 939 Facebook and YouTube views.

STRATEGY 3. SPACE

Because the Bridge Park is not due to be completed until 2024, this strategy remains dormant, at least as written. But in 2019, Bridge Park did engage other venues even beyond the perennial locales of THEARC property, where Bridge Park leaders are based, and the Anacostia Park venue for the river festival. Of even greater consequence, however, is the assistance Bridge Park leaders provided to its creative partners in assuming virtual “space” for sharing their works and products.

A good example of Bridge Park opening up both a new physical and virtual venue for cultural arts occurred in 2020, when Bridge Park unveiled the new “Hopkins Mural,” which was attended by 15 socially distanced viewers in person and received 890 combined Facebook and Instagram views. This mural was commissioned to create a new sense of place for a new BBAR garden and provide ownership of the farm, which is located near two apartment buildings. By creating an event around the mural

unveiling, Bridge Park provided both physical and digital space to support local artists in commissioning a mural and to support residents in celebrating their new garden communally.

Reflecting on how Bridge Park's partnership eased the sense of crisis the indefinite closures of indoor spaces evoked for artists, one Ward 8 creative entrepreneur said, "Before, an artist's core job was to gather at least 10 people. So when quarantine started, everything stopped.... For four months, we didn't know what to do, so 90 percent of our business was gone because of our pandemic. The pandemic changed a lot of things artistically. There is still uncertainty of what we are going to be able to do, especially if you are a live theater performer. Thankfully, we have found a little success online."

STRATEGY 4. BUILD CAPACITY OF LOCAL ARTISTS

Entrepreneurs who focus on food and the arts benefited heavily from the ongoing capacity-building support provided by Bridge Park and partners like Wacif. In addition, annual events that Bridge Park has managed or supported since 2015, including the Anacostia River Festival and Taste of the Harvest, have become an important source of revenue and a marketing platform for local artists. Bridge Park has also paid substantial fees to artists for participating in Bridge Park festivals, panel discussions, and other activities, such as the CSA grocery bag and product giveaways. For example, east-of-the-river artists involved in the river festival and in the nearby artists' market made \$2,582 in vendor fees from Bridge Park. Unfortunately, the 2020 river festival, typically held in April, had to be canceled, undercutting payment of artists' fees for that event. For the 2020 virtual harvest festival, Bridge Park paid out \$3,350 in artists' fees to local artists who facilitated the virtual sessions.

Insights for the Field

As the JPMorgan Chase PRO Neighborhoods funding draws to a close, the coming years will be a significant test for the Bridge Park EDP. The intersections of recovery from the pandemic and the launch of Bridge Park construction will trigger a flurry of activity and potential growth in Ward 8. Bridge Park's work so far has laid the groundwork to take advantage of the increase in activity to drive capital and other investments toward the longtime Black residents who live near the park. In particular, the PRO Neighborhoods partnership has already led to quantifiable results in the preconstruction period. Standing up the first community land trust in DC, supporting the installation of Wacif's ongoing small business accelerator work, and providing a sustained platform for Skyland's construction training are just a few examples of the groundwork laid to keep longtime residents in place to benefit from the dramatic neighborhood changes to come. The question moving forward is whether this groundwork will

translate into improved conditions, reduced displacement, and more resources and capital for the Black community during and after Bridge Park construction.

The research team offers the following insights for Bridge Park leaders, their partners, and other entities nationwide who wish to support or lead equitable development efforts in gentrifying communities.

- **Unify partners around common goals.** In each of its EDP focal areas, Bridge Park has sought out and coordinated partners who can lead, support, and amplify results aimed at combating Ward 8 development pressures that precede and go beyond the park itself. The PRO Neighborhoods partnership demonstrates how, in a short period, a well-supported collaboration of strong entities can produce an infrastructure that might eventually prevent the displacement of longtime residents at scale. This infrastructure is still new, however, and it will need to grow and be linked up even more robustly with other efforts, especially those being mounted by the District government and developers, to have a credible chance of addressing gentrification and displacement at scale for DC residents of modest means.
- **Search for mutually reinforcing strategies across all goal areas.** Lessons learned from the PRO Neighborhoods partnership suggest that bringing partners together around a concrete shared strategy, project, or programming could help disparate partners develop long-term mutually reinforcing connections. PRO Neighborhoods connected fruitfully to Bridge Park staff within their silos of housing, workforce, and small business, but the potential synergies among the partners did not mature completely, absent Bridge Park construction getting under way. Interestingly, the fourth focal area of arts and culture—not part of the original PRO Neighborhoods partnership scope—may have proxied as that unifying element for now in the way it touched both the small business and workforce development focal areas. Judging by the energy, emotion, and revenue arts and culture activities generated among residents, implementing partners, and funders, these more organic synergies are worth finding.
- **Seek to outpace rapid economic change.** Bridge Park leaders know that once the park begins construction, it will accelerate development pressures already mounting in Ward 8. This is one reason Bridge Park leaders have always prioritized their equitable development work over their construction efforts. Although construction delays have challenged the development of some EDP strategies, they have also helped Bridge Park get closer to producing a multiplier effect across its maturing efforts that may yet be capable of combating the additional development pressures the park will unleash once construction begins.

- **Deepen and track virtual engagement to beneficial activities.** The pandemic may have produced a small silver lining for Bridge Park in that, in some instances, the forced and rapid move to online delivery platforms may have increased longtime residents' access to small business capacity-building resources, arts and culture products, and other benefits, such as educational programming for youth. EDP efforts like Bridge Park's should seek to offer online engagement in tandem with in-person contacts as the pandemic wanes. But to truly track the relevance of their results, organizers will need to better understand who their remote attendees are and be assertive about closing digital divide gaps for would-be local patrons who cannot attend virtually.
- **Develop strategies that promote power and cultural sustainability for residents of color.** Bridge Park leaders have focused increasing intensity on developing power and promoting cultural equity with resident partners across the four years of EDP implementation. In fact, Bridge Park leaders and partners have increasingly discovered how central the EDP elements are to ensuring that current and future Black residents have a say in how Ward 8 neighborhoods evolve. The two companion briefs address these topics in greater detail.

Conclusion

Bridge Park is four years into its work to become a driver of equity in Wards 7 and 8. The partnerships and results detailed above provide concrete evidence about the progress made. Yet, the forces of development, of which the Bridge Park is a part, continue to progress, shaping and changing the same neighborhoods in which the Bridge Park seeks to create equity. Bridge Park has long realized that its efforts alone will not prevent these forces from displacing longtime Black residents who have preserved and shaped the city’s culture. This realization is the underlying driver of the work we detail in the companion briefs (Bogle and Torres Rodríguez 2021; Cohen 2021).

The goal of building resident power so that the community is organized in its response to gentrification and is leading the equity work—and the goal of providing the resources, space, and capacity to preserve Black culture in DC—are deeply intertwined with the overall EDP. Indeed, they are critical to Bridge Park’s goal to catalyze forces of equity beyond what they could generate alone.

The critical next phase of the EDP and of the park’s construction is fast approaching. The scale of development forces that the Bridge Park is generating will increase. But so will its potential to harness them and redistribute them to residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. Its ability to do that, and its ability to provide the platform and skills for residents to push other projects to do the same, we will be a significant part of the future for Wards 7 and 8 and equity across the city.

Notes

- ¹ “Bridge Park Equity,” Building Bridges Across the River and 11th Street Bridge Park, accessed March 25, 2021, <https://bbardc.org/equity/>.
- ² “Taste of the Harvest, Homestyle Eat Well, Well Be Well Community Conversation,” 11th Street Bridge Park panel discussion, video, 1:27:56, October 8, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=YotPwuVe12c>.
- ³ “Taste of the Harvest Homestyle, Food Makers Hustle,” 11th Street Bridge Park panel discussion, video, 1:03:35, October 15, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/dcbridgepark/videos/749663985764574/>.
- ⁴ “Taste of the Harvest Homestyle, Cooking with Chef Jordan,” 11th Street Bridge Park panel discussion, video, 58:02, October 17, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=KVDpEYt5TzM>.
- ⁵ “Taste of the Harvest, Homestyle Pumpkin Painting,” 11th Street Bridge Park panel discussion, video, 1:04:16, <https://www.facebook.com/dcbridgepark/videos/659159111470767/>.
- ⁶ “Taste of the Harvest, Homestyle: Food Stories for the Soul Playback Performance,” 11th Street Bridge Park panel discussion, video, 56:49, <https://www.facebook.com/dcbridgepark/videos/taste-of-the-harvest-homestyle-food-stories-for-the-soul-playback-performance/1885608698254176/>.

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