

FRI-B01: Conversations with Olmsted: Reimagining Prospect Park

Panelists:

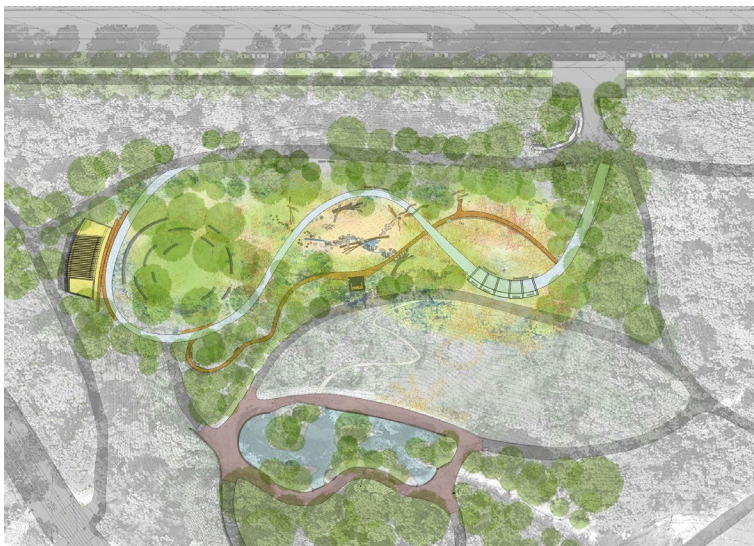
- **Sue Donoghue**, President and Park Administrator, [Prospect Park Alliance](#)
- **Nisha Baliga**, Co-Executive Director, [Hester Street](#)
- **Christian Zimmerman**, FASLA, Vice President, Capital and Landscape Management, [Prospect Park Alliance](#)

Description:

Prospect Park is Brooklyn, New York's flagship park, welcoming more than 10 million visitors each year. Explore recent and upcoming restoration projects, including the [re-envisioning of the park's northeast corner](#), and how this work is approached to be sensitive to the original Olmsted & Vaux plan yet meet the needs of the communities that use and border the park today—particularly communities of color, young people, low-income families and new immigrants.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore how the team deployed a variety of interactive, qualitative and quantitative engagement tools designed to provide users with the inspiration and information needed to give meaningful input about the future of the Rose Garden site.
2. Identify the guiding principles that were developed by community members and the Alliance to ensure that future development and improvement efforts are founded in key community priorities, as well as site and feasibility factors.
3. Learn how Alliance designers are working on blending contemporary design into the historic layers of Prospect Park.
4. Learn about Re:New Prospect Park, a response to the impacts of COVID, which highlights the importance of community-centered and focused investment during challenging times.



*Conceptual Design of the Vale,
Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY*



*Community-center design activities
guiding future capital efforts*

Speakers



Sue Donoghue, President and Park Administrator, Prospect Park Alliance

Susan Donoghue is President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that operates the park in partnership with the City of New York, and Prospect Park Administrator. In this dual appointment, Sue is responsible for setting the vision and overall strategy for Brooklyn's flagship park. Sue leads a workforce of 200 staff in day-to-day park operations, and oversees fundraising and revenue-generating activities that provide \$12 million in general operating support for the park each year. Since her appointment in 2014, she has raised over \$90 million in capital funds to improve park access and equity. Sue led the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the Alliance, and spearheaded the transformation of its People + Culture and DEI initiatives. Prior to her appointment, Sue served as a Senior Advisor and Assistant Commissioner at NYC Parks, where she played a leadership role in PlaNYC, the blueprint for enhancing the city's sustainability. Sue earned a Master's in Public Administration from NYU's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service. She is a neighborhood resident, with her husband and three children, she avidly enjoys the Park in their daily life.



Nisha Baliga, Co-Executive Director- Hester Street

Nisha Baliga AICP (she/hers) is currently Co-Executive Director at Hester Street. Since joining in 2015, she has led multiple large-scale projects at the intersection of equity and climate adaptation, resiliency, arts and culture and health, including CreateNYC: A Cultural Plan for all New Yorkers, Cities RISE and Take Care 2020. Prior to Hester Street, Nisha spent a decade in the Urban Design Studio at Beyer Blinder Belle during which she lived and worked for 2 years in Tanzania helping plan a new campus for the Aga Khan University. Nisha holds a master's degree in Urban Planning from Columbia University, and has been recognized as a Next City Vanguard and by Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) Impact. She is a proud immigrant who spent her childhood in India, and lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two kids.



Christian Zimmerman, FASLA, Vice President, Capital and Landscape Management, Prospect Park Alliance

As the Alliance's chief landscape architect, Christian has been the guiding hand for one of the most respected park restorations in the country. As a park manager, he oversees day-to-day operations for all capital design, construction and landscape management, leading a team of architects, landscape architects, horticulturists, arborists, and ecologists who work with the City, park operations, community organizations, and park patrons to balance the needs and demands of historic preservation, natural resources, and park maintenance. He also oversees the Prospect Park Archives. In his 31 years of shaping the park, he has drawn on the talents of a wide range of collaborators and Alliance staff to bring the best to the revitalization.