

Grantee: Damon Rich, City of Newark Chief Urban Designer**Date Grant Received: May 2011****Grant Project Date(s) Implemented: September 14-15, 2012****Grant Project:** *(brief description)*

Six Loeb fellows and one special guest participated in the first-ever Newark Riverfront Summit, held at the conclusion of the city's first summer (after only 346 years) with a riverfront park along the Passaic. The summit consisted of a set of three private workshops with civic groups and elected officials, a boat tour with elected officials and residents, and a concluding public conversation and report-out at the Newark Museum.

Over the course of the day-and-a-half program, Loeb Fellows surveyed and advised on past, current, and contemplated efforts of Newark Riverfront Revival (NRR), Mayor Cory Booker's initiative to revive Newark's riverfront and bring concrete benefits to the city and its residents. Loeb's facilitated, stimulated, and propagated thought among a diverse set of community stakeholders at different levels of engagement with the riverfront. The group met with community-based organizations, real estate developers, City officials, and residents to discuss how improvements along Newark's riverfront might be tied to the cultural, economic, and recreational life of Newark's residents and communities.

Participants

Participants (Loeb Fellows):		Fellowship Year & Location	
1	Peggy King-Jorde	1996,	New York City
2	Steve Lewis	2007,	Los Angeles
3	India Lee	2009,	Cleveland
4	Charles McKinney	1994,	New York City
5	Damon Rich	2007,	Newark
6	Glenn Smith	1997,	Washington, DC
Participants (Others):		Affiliation and Expertise	
1	Mindy Fullilove	Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Social Psychiatry and the Built Environment	
		President, Newark Municipal Council	
2	Donald Payne, Jr.		
3	Friends of Riverfront Park	Community-based organization	
4	Ironbound Community Corporation	Community-based organization	
5	Lower Broadway Neighborhood Association	Community-based organization	
6	La Casa de Don Pedro	Community-based organization	
Sponsorships, Collaborators, etc. (Names and Affiliations)		Amount of \$ Support	Describe Nature of Support or Engagement
1	Newark Museum	\$500	Discounted rate for auditorium rental
Total \$s Donated by Others		\$500	

Project Content

Topic/Issue

(Please describe the primary issue of the built or natural environment that this Grant Project addressed)

Newarkers and Newark organizations have been working for over 30 years to revive their riverfront and reconnect to the river. Since 2009, these efforts have at last begun to materialize through activities, programs, and the physical transformation of the riverfront:

- Over 2000 Newarkers and others have taken boat and walking tours along the Passaic
- The City's Planning Office has proposed and the Central Planning Board has recommended for approval a wide-ranging zoning update for 250 acres of riverfront land, including the first requirements for public riverfront access
- Over 100 students have participated in programs like Newark Riverfront 3000, an investigation into the state of the riverfront that resulted in a City Hall exhibition
- The City's Newark Riverfront Revival website (www.newarksriverr.wordpress.com) regularly receives 1500 unique visitors per month, and the riverfront has received positive coverage in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, New Jersey Star-Ledger, and other media outlets
- The remediation of the riverbed has begun 30 years after being declared a Superfund site.
- In June 2012, Essex County completed the first true riverfront open space in the city, the 12-acre Essex County Riverfront Park.
- The completion of the park was accompanied by the launch of Friends of Riverfront Park, which labors to ensure this new open space is full of positive activities including free public yoga and Zumba, concerts, environmental education, and organized sports
- In coming months, a second park segment will be completed by the City and the Trust for Public Land, containing a walking and biking trail, floating boat dock, riverfront boardwalk, and other settings for relaxation, picnics, exercise, and environmental education.

Despite these advances, major challenges remain to reviving Newark's riverfront in a sustainable and inclusive manner. For example, the City of Newark has not established any dedicated capacity (beyond partial assignment of a single urban designer) or articulated any medium- or long-term plan for public investment in the riverfront. The goal of the first Newark Riverfront Summit was to reflect on recent accomplishments, celebrate the commitment of Newark residents and organizations to reviving the river, discuss goals for coming years, and ask hard questions about how to achieve them. How do we keep executing the nuts and bolts of riverfront revival while dreaming of how this work can continually amplify the unique cultural, economic, and recreational life of Newark's residents and communities?

Project Activities

(Please describe each activity undertaken with this Loeb Grant (e.g. charettes, community meetings, reports, etc.)

FRIDAY, SEPT 14

1 pm Orientation Lunch

1:45 pm Community Conversation: Lower Broadway & North Ward

La Casa de Don Pedro, 39 Broadway

This community, in Newark's northern section, is only in the beginning phases of interacting with its riverfront. At a discussion held behind a distribution facility overlooking the river, Loeb's engaged a representatives from La Casa de Don Pedro, a strong community development corporation, and the Lower Broadway Neighborhood Association, an emerging coalition of community groups, on questions including:

- What does the City's proposed riverfront rezoning mean for this area?
- How can we advance the discussion on creating a small riverfront park on City-owned land just north of the Clay Street Bridge?
- What are the property-owner's development plans for the riverfront land between Clay Street and Fourth Avenue?
- How can we get more North Ward and Lower Broadway residents involved in the river and riverfront?

4:45 pm Downtown Riverfront Dinner

Home of Zemin Zhang & Anne Mabry, 23 James Street

Loeb's dined and participated in a structured conversation with a set of Newark downtown stakeholders, representing real estate developers, the Newark Library, Rutgers Business School, the Newark Downtown District and more on questions:

- How can the riverfront best benefit downtown and the city overall?
- How can more people, companies, and institutions get involved?
- What must be done?

6:50 pm Riverfront Jazz R&B and Environmental Justice Storytelling

Essex County Riverfront Park

A local jazz R&B group played the first concert in Essex County Riverfront Park, interspersed with a public discussion among four of Newark's prominent environmental justice and park advocates.

SATURDAY, SEPT 15

7:50 am Breakfast, Je's Restaurant, 260 Halsey Street

8:50 am Newark Riverfront Boat Tour

Fellows participated with the Newark Municipal Council President and 14 Newark residents on a two-hour boat tour narrated by Damon Rich travelling seven miles of the Lower Passaic River.

12:45 pm Community Conversation: Ironbound Riverfront

Ironbound Community Corporation
432 Lafayette Street

This neighborhood, in Newark's East Ward, has the oldest living tradition of advocacy around the river and open spaces adjacent to it. It was 30 years of struggle lead by Ironbound residents that led to the creation of the city's first riverfront parks. With this group, the conversation started with a discussion of the history of activism around the river and a report of 2012 accomplishments. Loeb and locals then engaged in a discussion around:

- + What does the proposed riverfront rezoning mean for the area?
- + How can we building support, financial and otherwise, for programming in both segments of Riverfront Park in 2013 and beyond?
- + How can we address safety and security at Riverfront Park?
- + How can we get more Ironbound residents involved in the river and riverfront?
- + How can we ensure that Ironbound riverfront parks are parks for all Newarkers?

4:30 pm Public Conversation

Newark Museum
49 Washington Street

The summit concluded with a public conversation at the Newark Museum, featuring a dozen short presentations by Loeb and other riverfront stakeholders including park advocates, environmental groups, artists, boaters, and more. Two panel discussions were interspersed to spark unexpected connections and alliances.

7 pm Adjourn**Outcomes**

1 Objectives Met

(Describe the objectives of the Grant Project and how they were achieved)

1. Further galvanize the citywide constituency for accountable and sustainable riverfront development.

The Summit provided an opportunity for riverfront advocates to celebrate their successes and reflect on the challenges ahead. It also publicized recent accomplishments and brought more people to the cause, including elected officials. In all, over 250 people participated in the Summit.

2. Continue identification of promising riverfront activities and programs to inform future design.

Several groups that participated in neighborhood-focused sessions remarked on the wealth of ideas and precedents brought by the Loeb. In the case of the Lower Broadway neighborhood, participation in the summit lead them to seek out a young volunteer designer to work with the City and the neighborhood association to produce a vision plan for converting an excess parcel of public land to a modest riverfront public space.

3. Test and extend the “acupunctural” and incremental improvement strategy in place since 2008.

The Riverfront Summit provided helpful opportunities for presenting various constituencies with an overview of recent riverfront efforts. By bring groups together to share stories, the Summit helped forge new narratives of agency, allowing participants to better imagine their city’s natural and social landscapes.

2 Outcomes

(Describe outcomes anticipated or unanticipated that followed the work of the Grant Project by Participants or by Others)

Participation

Over 250 people participated in the Summit and its related events:

Lower Broadway Community Conversation: 13

Downtown Community Conversation: 25

Riverfront Jazz R&B and Environmental Justice Storytelling: 120

Boat Tour: 25

Ironbound Community Conversation: 17

Public Conversation: 58

Participants came from a broad swath of Newark's riverfront-adjacent neighborhoods. The Public Conversation in particular drew out speakers and stakeholders from across the city. Participants ranged in income from public housing residents to principals of real estate development companies.

Media coverage

The Summit was covered by the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, WBGO FM, newarkpulse.com, and newarknj.patch.com. The Mayor tweeted about the Summit to his 1.3 million followers.

New projects launched or catalyzed

The Lower Broadway Neighborhood Association has begun work with a young volunteer architectural designer to create a brochure that demonstrates the potential transformation of a City-owned riverfront parcel into a small promenade park.

The Summit helped catalyze support for the allocation of funds for a Citywide Riverfront Coordinator, to be hired in May 2013.

Several participants quoted and referenced Loeb's and others in subsequent testimony to the Central Planning Board.

3 Influence & Community Engagement

(Please describe the wider influence of the project or how the community engaged with the Project)

The main goals of the Newark Riverfront Summit revolved around community engagement, celebrating the achievements of organized neighborhoods and pushing all think about necessary next steps.

Post-Summit feedback showed that it was a strongly reinforcing experience for those who have been active in riverfront work, and was a chance for an entire community to recognize itself in a new way.

The Summit was also an chance to enhance our first summer of riverfront programming through new formats (Jazz R&B and Environmental Justice Storytelling) and by drawing in more regional organizations from New Jersey and New York to see and join with Newark groups.

Optional Report Section

Recommendations to Future Grantees

(Please feel free to describe any lessons learned that you think Loeb Fellows would find useful in proposing or implementing a Loeb Grant)

While it will always be a challenge to present a complex design and environmental situation in a brief period of time, I strongly recommend the particular utility of Loeb's to stir the pot, to ask hard questions that a more locally embedded person might avoid, and to shake up parochial certainties about intractable difficulties or the inadequacies of particular constituencies.

Additional Information

(Please use this space to expand on any questions listed above or add information you think of interest or valuable to the Fellowship)

Perhaps the most important obstacle overcome in planning the Summit was the assumption by some Newarkers that the Harvard people were coming in to tell us what to do. The Environmental Justice Storytelling event in particular did a valiant job of undermining distinctions between experts and laypeople, between visiting consultants and rooted locals. I would be excited to see how future projects push the notion of expertise and experts themselves into new contexts where expertise is seen as something flowing between all people and never a one-way transmission.



Cory Booker @CoryBooker

6h

RT @NewarkRiverfrnt: RSVP today for Saturday's first-ever Newark Riverfront Summit! newarksrivier.wordpress.com/2012/08/30/sep...
@CityofNewarkNJ

Hide media Reply Retweet Favorite



Friday, Sept 14, 2012
6:30 pm

Essex County Riverfront Park
Raymond Blvd at Brill St, Newark, NJ 07105
M1 bus to Ferry & Chrystie Streets, walk north 2 blocks.
Bring lawnchairs & blankets!

Riverfront Jazz R&B

FREE &
OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC

featuring **MELLECTRIX**
& Environmental Justice Storytelling

This event is sponsored by the Loeb Fellowship Alumni Council in conjunction with the Newark Riverfront Summit. Join the public discussion on Newark's Riverfront 5-7 pm on Saturday, September 15 at the Newark Museum.



Learn more
www.newarkriver.wordpress.com
(201) 563-2834
newarkriverfront@gmail.com



Friends of
Riverfront Park



This program was made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations in this program do not necessarily represent those of NEH or NJCH.





Saturday, Sept 15, 2012
5-7 pm Doors open 4:30 pm

Newark Museum
49 Washington St, Newark, NJ 07102

Newark Riverfront Summit

FREE &
OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC

SEE what's happening
HEAR future plans
JOIN the movement

A public
conversation about
a city and its river

Please join us to celebrate the commitment of Newarkers to revive their riverfront and discuss the future.

Since 2009, big things have happened along Newark's riverfront. Over 1500 Newarkers have taken tours along the Passaic, Newark's Planning Office has proposed a zoning update for 250 acres of riverfront land, the remediation of the riverbed has begun 30 years after being declared a Superfund site, and the profile of the riverfront has been raised by a City Hall exhibition and media coverage.

Most significantly, Essex County opened 12 acres of riverfront park in June 2012 with sports fields, walking paths, and playgrounds. Friends of Riverfront Park was founded to fill this space with activities including free public yoga and Zumba, concerts, environmental education, and organized sports.

In coming months, a second park segment will be completed by the City of Newark and the Trust for Public Land, containing a walking and biking trail, floating boat dock, riverfront boardwalk, and more.

Join the conversation about what happens next.

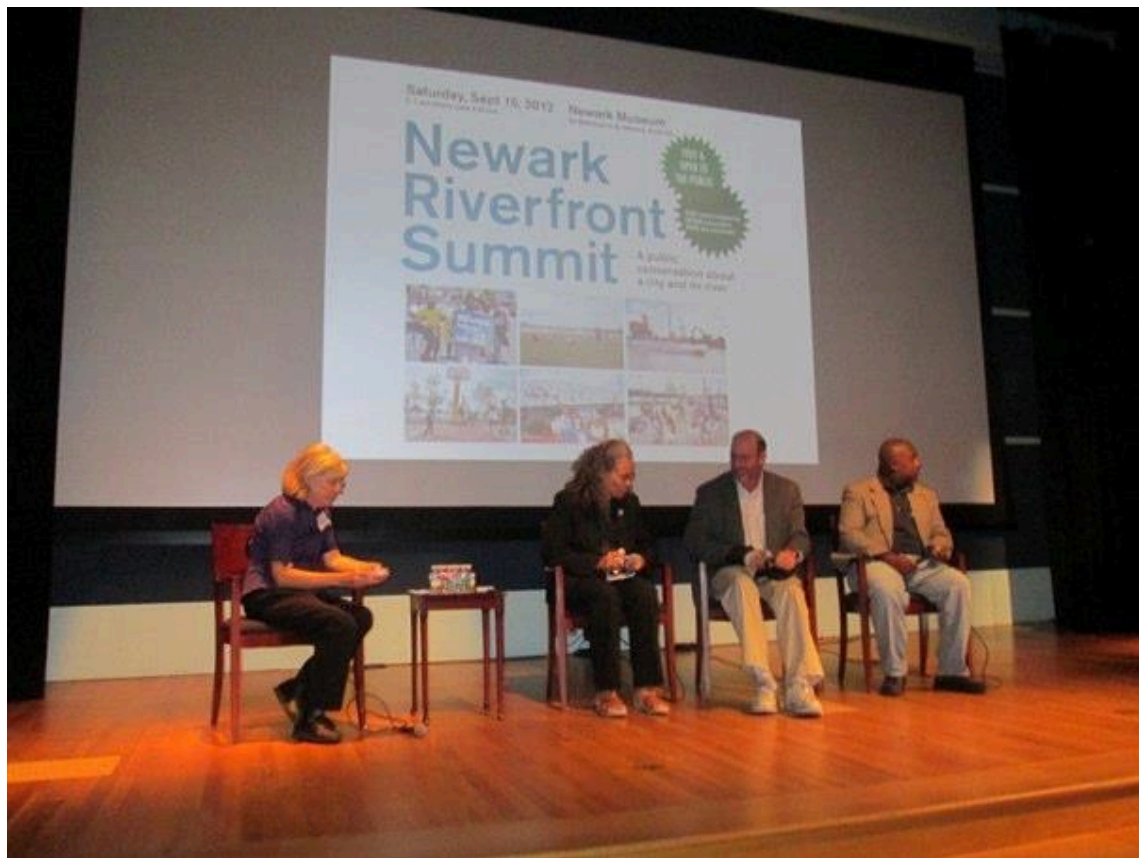


Learn more & RSVP
(201) 563-2834 newarkriverfront@gmail.com
www.newarksriverriver.wordpress.com

EVENT SPONSORED BY THE LOEB FELLOWSHIP ALUMNI COUNCIL



Friends of
Riverfront Park









Oct 16, 2012

by J

Jerry Gant
12 hours ago via iPhoto 📷

On my way to give a presentation for The Newark Alfredo Dante Riverfront Summit at The Newark Museum, and your boy, came to' illuminate the whole place with Gantalism from top to bottom. hahah....

JG...

Share

👍 Kaylan Jones and CenterBlock Boy Poe like this.

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