



THE HIGH LINE NETWORK HOSTS 2025 POLICY LAB ON REWILDING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Infrastructure Reuse Practitioners Come Together to Share Best Practices in Designing Ecologically-Considered Public Spaces

NEW YORK, NY (October 15, 2025) — From October 15 to October 17, the High Line and Bronx River Alliance will co-host the [2025 High Line Network Policy Lab: Rewilding the Built Environment](#), a convening for professionals working on public infrastructure reuse projects that will center on practices in urban ecology—exploring approaches to design, programming, and stewardship that reconnect people, nature, and place. Experts from projects across North America will explore how public spaces can embody ecological health through design and stewardship rooted in soil, air, water, flora, fauna, and people. The three-day program encompasses opportunities for 75 practitioners across greenspaces and urban design to connect with each other, learn from experts in the field, and directly observe best practices in ecological horticulture in action at the High Line and Bronx River Greenway.

Highlights include the keynote event, [Future Nature: Rethinking Public Landscapes as Resilient Systems](#), a conversation between Thomas Rainer, a leading voice in ecological landscape design and co-author of *Planting in a Post-Wild World*, and Azzurra Cox, landscape architect and assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania, on resilient ecological design, which takes place on Wednesday, October 15, at 6:00pm, and will be livestreamed to the public.

Designed for executive leadership, horticulturists, conservationists, and other practitioners, this forum will feature time for executive directors to meet together as well as keynotes, panels, receptions, and site visits. Guided tours of the High Line and the Bronx River Greenway, led by the teams who steward these celebrated green spaces, will offer an opportunity to engage directly with the leaders and practitioners shaping and sustaining some of the most influential living landscapes in our field.

The convening also offers High Line Network members an opportunity to participate in a collaborative session focused on designing a project to advance research and best practices in urban ecology. Joint initiatives that come out of sessions like this are an elemental resource of the High Line Network, giving projects from across North America and at varying stages in their development and with differing needs and priorities a chance to better understand each other's work, find synergies, and evaluate collectively to establish best practices that can then be shared more broadly within field publications. As such, the 2025 Policy Lab also previews the launch of the Network's publication *Inspiration from the Field: Strategies and Tactics for Workforce Development*, a series of case studies which was born out of the first Policy Lab covering the same subject terrain. Launching publicly on November 6, this resource provides

critical insights on incorporating socio-economic equity to the broader fields of greenspace and urban design.

"Policy Lab is such an vital opportunity for High Line Network member projects to share insights and expertise, collaborate, and deepen the impact of their work, which serves a collective 50 million visitors across North America each year," said Alan van Capelle, Executive Director of Friends of the High Line, which leads the High Line Network. "We are more than a community of colleagues. We are a powerful force in this transformational movement of infrastructure reuse and cultivating healthy urban public greenspaces."

"I am thrilled to welcome leaders of dynamic, transformational infrastructure reuse projects from across North America who are leading the way in creating inclusive, sustainable, and beautiful public spaces for people to gather, enjoy nature, and have fun," said Kira Strong, Senior Director of the High Line Network.

Hosted by the High Line across spaces on and around the park on the west side of Manhattan, the first two days of the event offer a range of opportunities for professionals to connect both informally and in more structured formats, as well as:

- showcase presentations of innovative projects driving ecological impact
- a panel on how public space landscapes can foster biodiversity
- a panel exploring public space's role in bridging people and nature
- a horticulture tour of the High Line
- and an "ask the experts" Q&A session with High Line staff.

The final day, hosted by Bronx River Alliance, takes place at the New York Botanical Garden and along the Bronx River and includes:

- a panel on the ecology of the Bronx River
- a collaborative session for Policy Lab participants to co-create ideas for a Joint Initiative focused on urban ecology
- and guided tours of the Bronx River Greenway with staff from the Bronx River Alliance and New York Botanical Garden.

Presented by the High Line, the High Line Network is a peer to peer group of infrastructure reuse projects. As cities become denser and land for traditional parks becomes more scarce, residents are finding creative ways to bring greenspace to their neighborhoods. Projects in the High Line Network transform underutilized infrastructure into new urban landscapes. Redefining what a park can be, these hybrid spaces are also public squares, open-air museums, botanical gardens, social service organizations, walkways, transit corridors, and more. Previous High Line Network Policy Labs took place in San Francisco in 2023, and in Mexico City in 2024.

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The High Line Network's 2025 Policy Lab is co-hosted by the High Line along with Network member the Bronx River Alliance.

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