Paths to Improvement: Recommendations in the Neighborhood

1. **Bike Lanes**
   
   New York City bike lanes only extend for a few blocks on 174th Street, at the neighborhood’s northern edge. Adding new bike lanes throughout the area will link local residents to the city’s grid: from proximal Manhattan to the adjacent Greenway. For young people and many residents without cars, good bike access to the Greenway is critical to its use by neighborhood residents. In addition, lanes provide safety and comfort to encourage biking as a physical activity for the community.

2. **Westchester Ave & West Farms Rd Intersection**
   
   This intersection is currently a dangerous and congested meeting point for the Sheridan Expressway, Westchester Avenue, and West Farms Road. Trucks, two major bus routes, significant through-traffic and an elevated train running over Westchester Avenue combine to create a hazardous and unwelcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists. A traffic circle and better crosswalk design mean improved safety for residents navigating the area. In addition, its relationship to the Gilbert Cass train station makes the site an instantly recognizable Greenway access point and landmark.

3. **Cass Gilbert Train Station**
   
   The Cass Gilbert train station once served regional rail lines that no longer stop in the neighborhood. Although years of neglect have badly dilapidated the building, it remains a historical and aesthetic treasure of great cultural value. Complete rehabilitation of the building poses significant expense, but restoring the building’s shell as an entrance to the Greenway may be more cost effective. Once the foundation is restored, a covered extension to Concrete Plant Park can serve as community space for a farmer’s market, gallery, or eco-education center.

4. **Westchester Ave Bridge**
   
   The elevated train’s metal supports awkwardly divide this wide bridge into four lanes of traffic, rendering the outer lanes dangerous and underused. By reclaiming the northernmost westbound lane of traffic and transforming it into a pedestrian walkway and bike lane, this promenade can serve as a gateway for neighborhood residents to observe and access the river and Greenway. It also shortens the distance required for Greenway users to cross the street.

5. **Westchester Ave Bus Stops Under Elevated Trains**
   
   At these bus stops underneath the elevated train, passengers must walk out into traffic to wait for the bus. This dangerous situation can be remedied by extending Westchester Avenue’s sidewalks to reach the El’s columns. Extended sidewalks provide passengers with a safe waiting area. They also offer new vendor locations, street greening opportunities and a footpath to encourage MTA elevators.

6. **172nd St & Bronx River Ave Intersection**
   
   The Western stub of this intersection is a dead-end currently used as auto parking by an auto body shop on the northwestern corner of the intersection. By reclaiming this underutilized street space and transforming it into a pedestrian mall with plantings and plenty of bike parking, this space can serve as an inviting and safe entrance point to the Greenway. Locating a community-oriented bike repair and rental/sale shop, such as Recycle-A-Bicycle, near this entryway could provide the community with youth internships and contribute to local transportation infrastructure. Here, former parking spaces at street corners are reclaimed as sidewalk extensions. This calms traffic and reduces the distance required for pedestrians to cross the wide avenue. Crossing signals and surface treatments, such as brickwork, ensure safety for pedestrians.

7. **174th St Bridge**
   
   This bridge traverses the Bronx River and provides access to the Greenway, but it is currently intimidating for both pedestrians and cyclists. The existing bike lanes’ thin widths and painted markings offer limited safety for cyclists. Additionally, existing pedestrian ramps only offer Greenway access on the west side of the river. By eliminating the median between auto lanes, space can be freed for curb-protected bike lanes and extended sidewalk width. Building or relocating a pedestrian ramp on the east side of the bridge offers safe, convenient access to both sides of the river. Fence removal also improves visual access from the bridge.

8. **In the Future: River House**
   
   The Bronx River Alliance has allocated a location and developed an architectural plan for River House, which will serve as their headquarters and a boat house. Offering watercraft rentals can complement existing educational programming and expand neighborhood access to fun and unique water transportation options. In addition to providing novel opportunities for physical fitness, watercraft rentals help to strengthen community engagement with the river.