

## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction



Jamaica Bay Greenway at Floyd Bennett Field

New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) has committed to growing the network of bicycle, pedestrian, and greenways facilities throughout the city; over 1,000 miles of bicycle facilities have been built, including 380 miles of protected lanes and paths. Many of these connect more than 60 miles of planned or completed waterfront public spaces. Greenways provide a safe, convenient, and fun space for active recreation and non-motorized transportation. The completion of the Jamaica Bay Greenway is a critical step toward expanding the greenway infrastructure in the city and completing an interconnected Brooklyn-Queens waterfront greenway system.

Jamaica Bay is a nearly 26,000-acre area located in New York City that encompasses parts of south Brooklyn, eastern Queens and Nassau County, and is formed by the 11-mile Rockaway Peninsula. The area contains a diverse ecological landscape, including tidal marshes, grasslands, coastal woodlands, sand dunes, and open waters. The Bay is a recreational and historical asset for New York City containing over 10,000 acres of open-space and parkland, including city and state parks, and portions of Gateway National Recreation Area managed by the National Park Service (NPS).

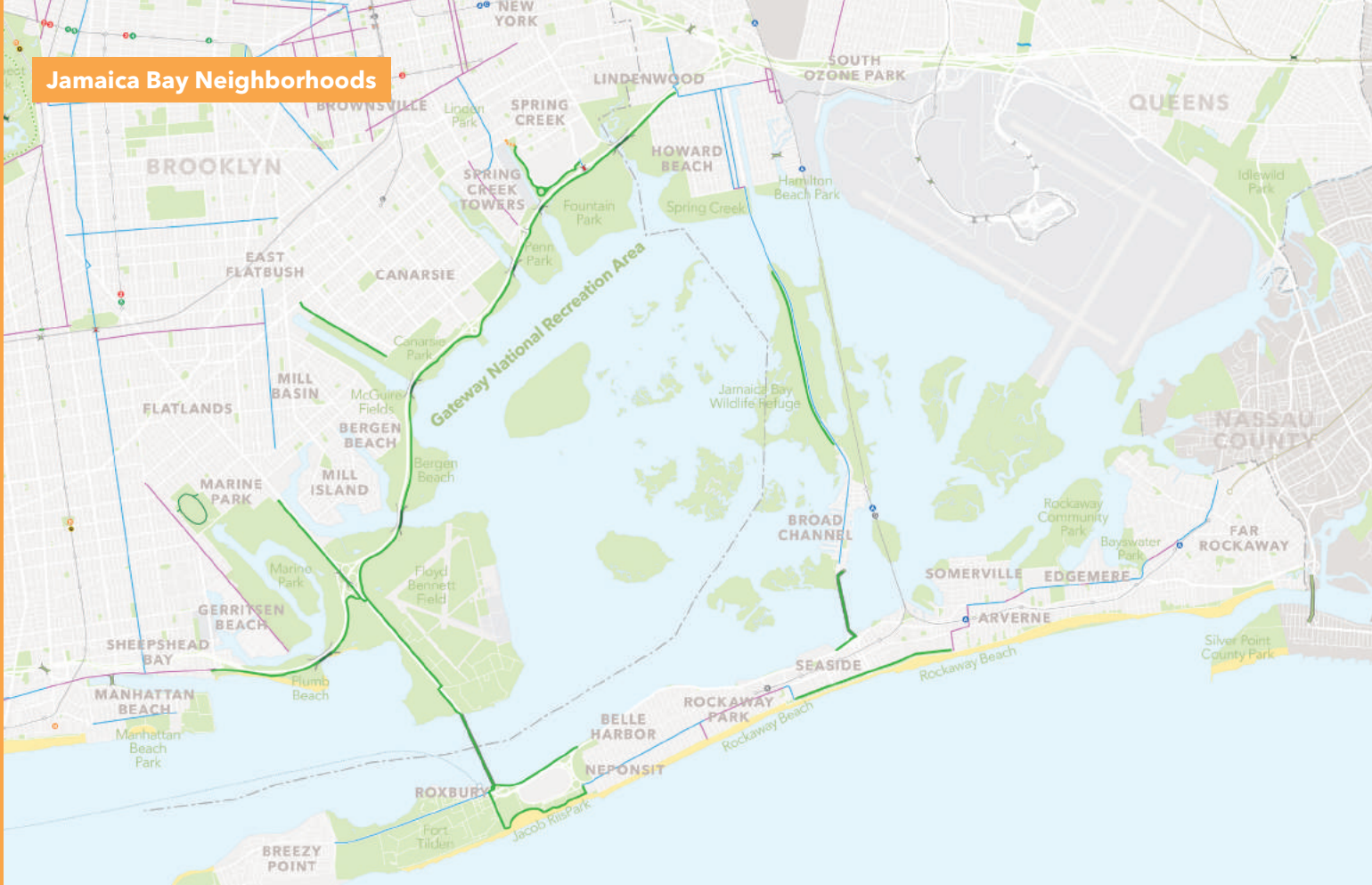
The Jamaica Bay Greenway is a planned 28-mile network of pedestrian and bicycle paths connecting numerous diverse and distinct communities along the Jamaica Bay waterfront to destinations such as Rockaway Beach, Marine Park, Canarsie Pier, Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, Riis Beach and the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The Greenway passes through five community boards in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens (CB 5, 15, and 18 in Brooklyn, CB 10 and 14 in Queens). More than 11 miles of the Greenway route already exist and serve roughly 100,000 local and regional visitors annually. The route is composed of various types of off-street multi-use paths and on-street bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. When completed, multi-use paths and on-street bicycle markings will create a loop route around Jamaica Bay, allowing cyclists and walkers to commute, exercise and explore the bay's natural beauty from Sheepshead Bay

in southern Brooklyn to Howard Beach in Queens to the Rockaway Peninsula. Recently, more than two miles of protected path have been added to connect the Canarsie neighborhood in Brooklyn to the Greenway, and other segments are now in the design phase. As the City and NPS continue to invest in the Jamaica Bay as a recreational destination and economic driver for South Brooklyn and Queens, a cohesive, user-friendly greenway system is a critical resource for accessing all the Bay has to offer.

### Project Goals

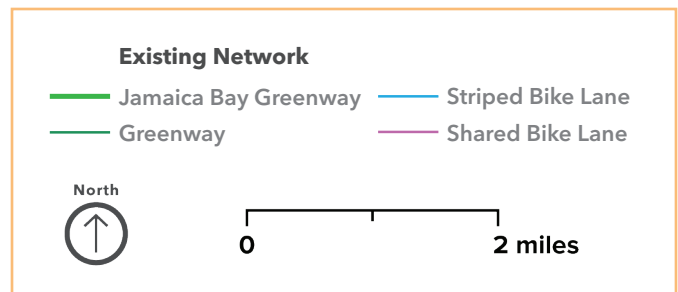
- Create a continuous and connected path, improving access to the Jamaica Bay waterfront.
- Connect residents and visitors to existing recreational opportunities afforded by the Jamaica Bay network of parks and beaches.
- Provide convenient and safe connections to greenway paths from the local street network.
- Expand transportation choices and enhance active recreation to accommodate the broadest range of users and uses.
- Create efficient new commuting options that connect waterfront neighborhoods to the rest of the city.
- Create more inviting streetscapes with new trees and vegetation to improve quality of life and clean the air.
- Identify a series of capital projects around Jamaica Bay that improve connectivity and link route gaps.
- Act as a guide for the scoping, design and construction of capital projects.

## Jamaica Bay Neighborhoods



## Outreach and Engagement Process

In 2014, DOT and Regional Plan Association (RPA) began public engagement for the Jamaica Bay Greenway Implementation Plan. The process was publicized through direct mailings to over 1,000 individuals and organizations, email blasts to local stakeholders, flier distribution to local businesses, social media posts, press releases to local media outlets, presentations to dozens of community-based organizations, and hosting additional greenway tours to highlight the potential for a completed greenway. In addition, DOT and RPA held three rounds of community-planning workshops in four study areas around the Bay: Marine Park & Sheepshead Bay, Canarsie & Spring Creek, Howard Beach & Ozone Park, and Rockaway & Broad Channel. The first round of workshops served to identify priority ideas and destinations. The second round discussed the opportunities and challenges of different route alternatives. The third and final round presented selected route designs for community feedback. The community input from this process has helped identify potential routes and challenges and inform the final selected routes detailed in this plan.



Since 2011, RPA has worked with DOT, NPS, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) and several community organizations to conduct a comprehensive engagement process to encourage community members to experience the greenway and identify communities' needs, desires and ideas for improving greenway access. Over the course of two years partner organizations and agencies have presented to civic associations, community-based organizations and community boards; hosted dozens of public awareness events and greenway tours; distributed informational pamphlets; and held quarterly public forum meetings to discuss issues related to the greenway.

## Ongoing Parallel Work and Previous Studies

The Jamaica Bay Greenway route traverses a complex jurisdictional geography. The route includes property managed by DOT, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks), National Park Service (NPS), Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), and private stakeholders. While the Jamaica Bay Greenway Implementation Plan focuses on the DOT right-of-way specifically, the planning process and route selection is impacted by numerous previous and on-going plans, planning processes, and capital projects, including: Woodhaven-Cross Bay Bicycle Corridor Study (2009. NYCDCP), Jamaica Bay Greenway Missing Links Study (2010. NPS, Volpe), Reconstruction of Seven Bridges of the Shore Pkwy (DOT), Gateway National Recreation Area General Management Plan (2014. NPS), Rockaway Beach Boardwalk Reconstruction (NYCEDC, NYC Parks), Rockaway Parks Conceptual Plan (2014. NYC Parks) Spring Creek Salt Marsh and Coastal Upland Restoration (NYC Parks, USACE), Spring Creek Hazard Mitigation Project (NYSDEC, NPS). The most relevant projects are discussed in greater depth below.

### Jamaica Bay Greenway Missing Links Study (VOLPE, NPS)

In 2009, The Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (VOLPE) in partnership with NPS, conducted the Jamaica Bay Greenway Missing Links Study (released in 2010), which focused primarily on bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout Broad Channel and the Rockaway Peninsula. The report offered a range of long-term and short-term recommendations, from reconfiguring Beach Channel Dr with a multi-use path between the Marine Pkwy and Cross Bay Blvd bridges, to adding bicycle roll-up ramps on subway platform staircases, to consistent signage throughout the area (VOLPE 2010). The study highlighted improvements to the Greenway as an important priority to improve access to the Gateway National Recreation Area and strengthen mobility throughout the park's dispersed attraction areas. The report also called on partners like RPA to begin to convene a coalition of stakeholders to advocate for improved greenway infrastructure and increased access to the park. In 2011, RPA and National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program began to organize the Jamaica Bay Greenway Coalition—an informal group of partner organizations that advocate for improved greenway infrastructure around the Bay. In the summer of 2013, RPA, RTCA, and community partners held numerous public events, and three community workshops to begin to identify important destinations and community needs, desires, concerns related to

Canarsie & Spring Creek 4.8.14



Canarsie & Spring Creek 6.10.15



Rockaway & Broad Channel 10.16.14



Marine Park & Sheepshead Bay 06.03.15



the Greenway. In the fall of 2013, RPA summarized the findings of this process into summary reports.

### Reconstruction of Seven Bridges on the Shore Pkwy (DOT, NYC Parks)

DOT began reconstruction of seven bridges on the Shore Pkwy in 2012. The Jamaica Bay Greenway utilizes four of these bridges including: Gerritsen Inlet, Mill Basin, Paerdegat Basin and Fresh Creek Basin Bridges. Pedestrian and bicycle paths will be maintained at all times during construction. In addition to eliminating substandard conditions, addressing safety and improving highway drainage, pedestrian and bicycle paths are being upgraded on some bridges. Upgrades include a 12 foot bike path on the Fresh Creek Basin Bridge, and a barrier-protected pedestrian and bicycle path on the Paerdegat Basin Bridge. The new bridge designs also include improved landscaping on the bridge approaches and elements that maintain a consistent historical character, which is being implemented by NYC Parks. Construction work is expected to be completed in 2017. Landscaping work will continue until 2019.

### Rockaway Boardwalk Reconstruction (NYC Parks, NYCEDC)

The Jamaica Bay Greenway route is complemented by the Rockaway Beach Boardwalk, which is currently undergoing a phased reconstruction. More than \$140 million has been invested to repair and restore Rockaway Beach from the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. NYC Parks and NYC EDC are leading the construction of the new, protective and more resilient boardwalk that features various coastal protection structures. The new boardwalk will also include designated bike lanes and provide a continuous walking path from Beach 19 St to Beach 126 St. The entire boardwalk reconstruction is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2017.

### Spring Creek Hazard Mitigation Project (NYC Parks, USACE) and Spring Creek Hazard Mitigation Project (NYSDEC, NPS)

Spring Creek is one of many open spaces adjacent to the Jamaica Bay Greenway. In response to damage sustained in the park and upland communities during Hurricane Sandy, NYC Parks and NPS are advancing two restorations projects: the Spring Creek Salt Marsh and Coastal Upland Restoration in Spring Creek Park, and the Spring Creek Hazard Mitigation in the Spring Creek section of Gateway National Recreation Area.

In Spring Creek Park, NYC Parks has proposed a restoration of approximately 11 acres of intertidal marsh along the Spring Creek tributary to Jamaica Bay, and 16 acres of maritime habitat in the surrounding upland area. The project is currently in the design phase, and



Howard Beach & Ozone Park 10.7.14



Rockaway & Broad Channel 10.16.14



Wildlife Refuge Bike and Hike



Ride to Floyd Bennett Field

includes the regarding and planting of coastal habitat that will contribute to reduced future storm damage. In the later, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and NPS have received a \$50 million FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant to restore the Spring Creek Section of Gateway National Recreation Area and protect upland communities from coastal flooding. The project is scheduled to be completed by 2017.

The restored Spring Creek areas will provide open space for passive recreation and environmental education opportunities to nearby neighborhoods and visitors alike. Included in the Jamaica Bay Implementation Plan is a recommendation to consider the construction of an off-street multi-use path through the restored Spring Creek section of Gateway National Recreation Area.

## Summary of the Implementation Process

This plan describes the details of 26 feasible capital projects that span four study areas around Jamaica Bay. An estimated cost of construction is provided for each project. These capital projects will be implemented over time and as funds become available. More than \$2.5 million in federal funding has been secured for the Greenway. DOT will also pursue short-term improvements along the selected route using in-house crews and existing resources to improve the greenway, when feasible. All projects will be reviewed by the appropriate Community Boards before implementation.



Epic Ride



Wildlife Refuge Bike and Hike



Rockaway Art Ride

## Agencies Involved

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In addition to special approvals and agency reviews, some or all of the following standard NYC agency reviews will be required:

**New York City Department of Transportation (DOT):**

In-house development and reviews of each project will be conducted by appropriate divisions.

**New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC):** Design and administration of the construction of the capital projects identified, for which individual scopes of work have been developed by DOT.

**New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks):** Review and approval of all proposed changes that will impact existing street trees and Greenstreet plantings of which DPR has assumed maintenance responsibility.

**New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP):** Review and approval of all proposed Greenway designs that may affect existing drainage structures and/or proposed storm water flow rates and/or proposed storm water drainage facilities relating to the Greenways, water mains, and related work.

**National Park Service (NPS):** Review and approval of all proposed Greenway designs that may affect NPS adjacent NPS properties, like Penn and Fountain Parks, Spring Creek, and Canarsie Pier.

**New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT):** Review and approval of design impacts on NYSDOT right-of-way.

**New York City Housing Preservation & Development (HPD):** Review and approval of design impacts on adjacent HPD development properties.

**Public Design Commission (PDC):** Review requirements for non-standard items, features or amenities.

**Community Board:** Review and comment on proposed Greenway designs within each Community District prior to seeking PDC approval.

**Private Utility Companies:** Review and approval of Greenway design impacts on:

- Cable, telephone, fiber-optical, and other data services
- Above- and below-ground electrical services
- Gas and steam lines

