

MANHATTAN WATERFRONT GREENWAY

A VISION FOR CLOSING THE LOOP



NYC Parks



NYCEDC

WE'RE JUMP-STARTING THE COMPLETION OF A GREENWAY LINKING THE ENTIRE MANHATTAN WATERFRONT. THE HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY HAS VASTLY IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE ON THE WEST SIDE, AND WE WANT FAMILIES IN EVERY CORNER IN THE BOROUGH TO HAVE THAT SAME ACCESS TO BIKE, WALK, AND PLAY ALONG THE WATER.

MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO
APRIL 25, 2017 PRESS RELEASE

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LETTER FROM THE MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY

Dear Friends,

New York City's iconic waterfront is for everyone and we want all New Yorkers to be able to enjoy it. That's why my Administration has been working toward a dream that's been talked about for decades, but never achieved: A 32-mile Greenway that rings Manhattan Island. For me, it is a compelling vision that would expand park space along the forgotten edge of our city. Imagine if you could go all the way around Manhattan on foot or on a bike and experience the island in its entirety. Imagine if this waterfront was available to all our residents around the clock.

We have already put more than \$250 million toward closing gaps in the existing Greenway and developing waterfront parks in East Harlem, East Midtown, and Inwood. We have invested \$400 million in structural repairs in Greenway infrastructure throughout the borough. Last year, we made a \$100 million commitment to build out the East Midtown Greenway, and provided additional funding for a Manhattan Waterfront Greenway Study that will serve as a roadmap for completing the loop.

When finished, the Greenway will make the most-traveled bike lane in America even better, improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians, ensure that residents in historically underserved neighborhoods can access the water, and strengthen our resilience in the face of rising sea

levels and storm surges brought on by the changing climate. Combine all of this with our new NYC Ferry system and you can see that we are breaking a longstanding status quo by opening one of our greatest resources, the water, to 8.6 million New Yorkers and our many visitors. This is how we create a more livable city, a more efficient city and most of all, the Fairest Big City in America.

Sincerely,



Bill de Blasio
Mayor

LETTER FROM NYCEDC, NYCDOT, AND NYC PARKS

Dear fellow New Yorkers,

Our city would not be the same without its network of parks and open space. Greenways are an important part of that network, providing New Yorkers with another way to enjoy the city and ultimately making NYC greener and healthier.

This administration is committed to strengthening our open space network by making significant investments toward completing the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, a 32.5-mile path for walking and cycling along the borough's waterfront, which will eventually link over 1,000 acres of open space. Our agencies have worked closely to determine feasible ways to address the gaps and upgrade certain segments along the route; most of these are in low-income neighborhoods that have historically lacked direct waterfront access. When complete, the Greenway will bring much-needed open space to underserved areas, provide a fun waterfront corridor, and connect neighborhoods from Inwood to Battery Park. With dedicated pedestrian and bicycle space, we will also fulfill the goals of Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero initiative to reduce traffic fatalities.

We are proud that the City has taken critical steps toward completing the Greenway, including making major capital improvements, structural repairs and building out new waterfront parks and open space, but we also recognize there is more work to be done. Once completed, the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway will allow residents and visitors in every corner of the borough to bike, walk, and play along our miles of shoreline. Expanded waterfront access helps create strong neighborhoods and will build an even more vibrant city, both for today's residents and future generations.

We look forward to delivering this world-class amenity for you and making the city fairer and greener in the process.

Sincerely,



James Patchett
President & CEO
NYCEDC



Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
NYCDOT



Michael J. Silver
FAICP, Commissioner
NYC Dept. of
Parks & Recreation

THE VISION: CLOSING THE LOOP

The grand vision of “closing the loop” is guided by four principles:

- 1 Maximize the location along the waterfront:** Working within the context of the existing landscape, the ideal location is along the waterfront wherever possible.
- 2 Enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists:** The safety of the Greenway’s users is central to its design.
- 3 Improve access from upland areas:** In order for communities to benefit from the increased open space and waterfront, convenient, frequent, and safe access from upland areas is critical.
- 4 Account for sea level rise:** Greenway design should account for sea level rise in its alignment, elevations, and material choices.

TOTAL MANHATTAN GREENWAY
32.5 MILES

COMPLETED SEGMENTS
27.3 MILES
(84 PERCENT)

FUTURE SEGMENTS
5.2 MILES
(16 PERCENT)

Existing Greenway

Greenway Gap

Upgrade Area



FORT WASHINGTON PARK

INWOOD

THE BRONX

ESPLANADE GARDENS-HARLEM RIVER SPEEDWAY

HARLEM RIVER GREENWAY LINK

MANHATTAN

EAST MIDTOWN GREENWAY

QUEENS

UNITED NATIONS ESPLANADE

EAST RIVER PINCH POINT

BROOKLYN

THE OVERVIEW

MANHATTAN'S NEXT BIG PARK ISN'T IN THE CENTER. IT'S ON THE EDGE.

The Manhattan Waterfront Greenway is an important open space resource for the city, providing access to the shoreline for a variety of activities, integrating larger parks within a connected network, and providing a bike path for recreation and commuting. This is a flagship opportunity to create public open space, providing residents in some of Manhattan's most densely populated neighborhoods with improved access to the city's waterfront. When complete, the 32.5-mile Greenway loop will connect a network of green spaces totaling more than 1,000 acres—a space larger than Central Park—running continuously around the entire island. Joggers, walkers, cyclists, and people of varying ages and abilities from every neighborhood should have access to the Greenway that is designed within the context of each unique neighborhood.

Mayor de Blasio has made historic investments—more than any other mayoral administration—to jump-start closing the loop, committing more than \$250M to add 15 acres of quality open space that integrates the Greenway into Inwood, East Harlem, Harlem, and East Midtown. Most of these gaps are in low-income neighborhoods historically cut off from the waterfront.

Five sites are true gaps and two are existing paths in need of significant upgrades. Manhattan's geography and historical land uses have made completion of the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway challenging. Consideration of sea level rise and valuable habitats also demand that we are creative and resilient in our future Greenway designs. Each location has its own unique needs.

The following provides a view into what a completed Greenway might look like, with recommendations for all seven sites. As the projects advance, there will be ongoing public engagement in all phases of design and development.

GAPS

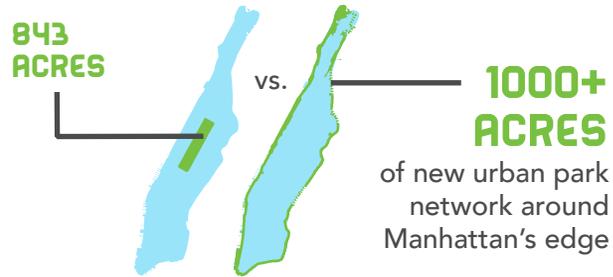
- Inwood
- Harlem River Greenway Link
- Esplanade Gardens-Harlem River Speedway
- East Midtown Greenway
- United Nations Esplanade

UPGRADE AREAS

- East River Pinch Point
- Fort Washington Park

BENEFITS OF CLOSING THE LOOP

Providing New Yorkers with a continuous waterfront open space **larger than Central Park**



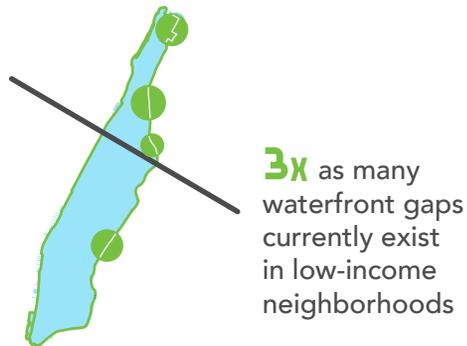
10K+ DAILY RIDERS

The Greenway sees **more bike rides each year** than there are residents in all of Los Angeles

15 ACRES

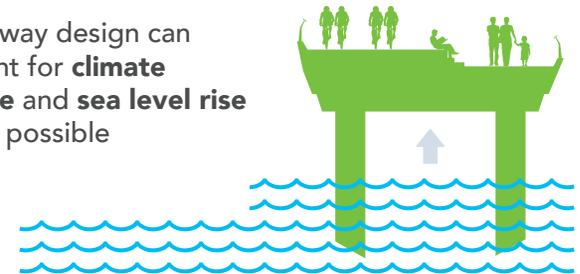
of **quality open space** that integrates the Greenway into the East Side and Upper Manhattan

Ensuring **equitable access to open space** for all Manhattan residents



Integrate **resilient design** into the waterfront

Greenway design can account for **climate change** and **sea level rise** where possible



THE HISTORY OF THE GREENWAY

Following the city's rich history of investing in public parks, the Greenway builds on years of advocacy and planning for both waterfront public space and safe bicycle infrastructure. The existing Manhattan Waterfront Greenway provides approximately 27.5 miles of shoreline pathway with additional on-road routes. The ultimate goal of the Greenway is to provide protected access to the shoreline—for cyclists, pedestrians, and a variety of activities—integrating larger parks within a connected network along the entire perimeter of the island.

1800s

"Parkways," designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux for scenic carriage drives and bicycles, first appear in New York City

1930s

Robert Moses vastly expands the parkway network in Manhattan with Riverside Park and East River Park

1970s–1980s

Citywide advocacy, coupled with federal funding to improve the environment, lead to new financial support for the Greenway

1975

Department of City Planning proposes a master plan to upgrade and build out the East River Walk (East 60s–East 120s)

1993

Mayor Dinkins puts forth
"A Greenway Plan for
New York City"

1997

Mayor Giuliani creates
"NYC Bicycle Master Plan"



2004

Mayor Bloomberg
publishes "Manhattan
Waterfront Greenway
Master Plan"

2008

West Harlem Piers Park
opens, closing a Greenway
gap from West 125th Street
to West 135th Street

APR 2017

Mayor de Blasio invests \$100M
to complete the East Midtown
Greenway gap

SEP 2017

Mayor de Blasio commits
\$5M to improve Harlem
Lane Playground as part
of the Community Parks
Initiative, which invests in
neighborhood parks with
the greatest need

DEC 2017

Mayor de Blasio commits
\$101M to construct a new
section of the Greenway
in East Harlem

AUG 2018

Mayor de Blasio
commits \$50M to
create 3 acres of
waterfront parks
in Inwood

FALL 2018

Mayor de Blasio
releases "A Vision for
Closing the Loop"

THE GAPS: INWOOD

Anticipated construction start: 2021

LOCATION

Sherman Creek to Inwood Hill Park (1.7 miles)

GAIN

Approximately 5 acres of new waterfront open space with future investment

NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEED

Manhattan's northernmost neighborhood, Inwood is surrounded by water and defined by a hilly landscape, open spaces such as Inwood Hill Park, and lively streets such as Broadway, Dyckman Street, and 10th Avenue—all with diverse local businesses. Over one mile of the Harlem River waterfront is currently inaccessible to the public, and Inwood is the only neighborhood in Manhattan where bike users have no direct access to the Greenway.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There has long been a community vision for improved public waterfront access and enhanced neighborhood connectivity in Inwood. Expanding the Greenway to Inwood in a thoughtful way will allow users to better experience existing and future open spaces. It will connect the rich natural resources of Inwood Hill Park via 218th Street and 10th Avenue to direct waterfront access at Sherman Creek.



The City is currently investing in Inwood to raise the quality of life for everyone, including \$41M to build out new waterfront at Academy Street at Sherman Creek by creating approximately two acres of new waterfront open space and connecting to Sherman Creek Park and the Harlem River Greenway to the south. At the northern tip of the Sherman Creek area, the City is also investing \$9M to restore the North Cove.

The City will work with the community to develop the design and programming of the waterfront open space, building on the Inwood NYC Neighborhood Plan and previous efforts such as the Sherman Creek Waterfront Esplanade Master Plan.

Through the recent Inwood rezoning, the City is also ensuring waterfront access at Sherman Creek by requiring new mixed-use private development to build public open space. New developments will provide public open space that complements and connects to the new public open spaces at Academy Street and North Cove, as well as five existing street-end parks, creating continuous public access along the Harlem River waterfront over time.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Concept sketch of future Sherman Creek at Academy Street by New York City Department of City Planning

THE GAPS: HARLEM RIVER GREENWAY LINK

Anticipated construction start: 2021



LOCATION

East 125th Street–East 132nd Street (0.7 miles)

GAIN

Approximately 7 acres of new waterfront open space

NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEED

In December 2017, Mayor de Blasio committed to building a seven-block waterfront park in East Harlem, linking the Greenway to the north and south. While waterfront access in East Harlem has expanded in recent years, a gap between 125th Street and 132nd Street remains. Transforming this portion of the Harlem River waterfront will dramatically expand open space in the neighborhood and become a key link on the East Side, creating continuous Greenway access from northern Harlem to East Midtown.

In advance of the mayoral commitment, NYC Parks worked with the community and key stakeholders to develop a concept plan for the future park. The plan reflects the community's priorities to serve a diverse user group, celebrate and reflect the neighborhood's local and rich culture, and create a safe and accessible park.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Harlem River Greenway Link will realize seven acres of new open space, featuring separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists, lawns, native plantings, integrated art, and unique places for users to relax and enjoy the unique waterfront views of Randall's Island and the Bronx. The concept plan also demonstrates community interest in additional features like playgrounds and picnic and barbecue areas. Most importantly, the new Harlem River Greenway Link will fortify the shoreline by making vast improvements and repairs to the bulkhead along the Harlem River.

The City has allocated \$101M to advance construction, which is expected to begin in 2021 and targeted for completion by 2023. Specific amenities are subject to available funding and the next phase of design. Community engagement will continue throughout the design process.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Concept rendering of Harlem River Greenway Link view toward RFK Bridge

THE GAPS: ESPLANADE GARDENS- HARLEM RIVER SPEEDWAY



LOCATION

East 145th Street–East 163rd Street (1.2 miles)

GAIN

Approximately 3.8 acres of improved open space

NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEED

Neighborhood residents are cut off from direct waterfront access due to the Harlem River Drive, subway rail yards, and private property. Expanding the Greenway to this population largely underserved by open space will require creative solutions. It represents an important opportunity to enhance the overall parks and open space network by linking underutilized Harlem River Drive service roads and city streets with a series of small neighborhood parks.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The first opportunity to integrate the Greenway with existing open spaces is through the reconstruction of Harlem Lane Playground from West 150th Street to West 154th Street, just inland of the Harlem River Drive. In 2017, the City announced over \$5M to improve the park as part of the Community Parks Initiative, an investment reserved for neighborhood parks in New York City. The capital project, expected to be completed in 2021, includes the reconstruction of the sports courts, community gathering spaces, plantings, paths, benches, and new adult fitness equipment. The project will re-establish the connection between the upper and lower portions of Harlem Lane Playground and introduce the opportunity to connect to Harlem River Park to the south and Holcombe Rucker Park to the north.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Rendering of future Harlem Lane Playground

THE GAPS: EAST MIDTOWN GREENWAY

Anticipated construction start: 2019



LOCATION

East 53rd Street–East 61st Street (0.3 miles)

GAIN

Approximately 1.5 acres of new waterfront open space

NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEED

In April 2017, Mayor de Blasio committed capital funding for design and construction of the East Midtown Greenway (EMG), allowing construction to start on this segment in 2019. This section of East Midtown has long had few connections to the waterfront due to the presence of the FDR Drive, a steep landscape, and lack of waterfront real estate.

The design for the EMG was informed by community engagement with an established Community Working Group representing local community boards, transportation and open-space advocates, and local residents. Community engagement for the EMG will continue through the final design process in close coordination with local community boards and other stakeholders.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The EMG will connect Greenway users to the recently improved Andrew Haswell Green Park to the north at East 61st Street and provide a transportation connection to the south, where the Greenway currently ends.

A new 40-foot-wide esplanade will run over the water parallel to the FDR Drive, allowing pedestrians to enjoy views of the water from both sides. The design for the EMG also embraces resilient and natural features, like a rock outcropping where riverine creatures can thrive. A widened area near 53rd Street will provide additional space for environmental programming, including an outdoor classroom, educational signs, fishing, and other features that emphasize New Yorkers' connection to the waterfront.

The EMG will be the first major gap filled since the opening of the Riverwalk in Riverside Park in 2010 and is expected to open by 2022.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Preliminary design rendering of East Midtown Greenway, looking north near East 54th Street

THE GAPS: UNITED NATIONS ESPLANADE



LOCATION

East 41st Street–East 53rd Street (0.6 miles)

GAIN

3 acres of new waterfront open space

NEIGHBORHOOD AND NEED

The densely populated stretch of East Midtown from East 41st Street to East 53rd Street has virtually no access to the waterfront due to the presence of the FDR Drive and the United Nations campus. Community stakeholders, including the United Nations Development Corporation, East Midtown Waterfront Esplanade Community Working Group, and local elected officials and residents, have come together to develop the scope of the project.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The concept design for the UN Esplanade was developed at the same time and in the same aesthetic as the one for the East Midtown Greenway and includes many of the same design elements. The concept includes a widened area at East 48th Street that allows for small gatherings, shaded areas, seating, and an opportunity for New Yorkers to feel closer to the water.

As established through the project's extensive community engagement process, the UN Esplanade will provide a link between existing public esplanades to the north and south, public access to the waterfront, a safe waterfront area for a wide range of users, and will promote New Yorkers' understanding of and relationship to the East River as a natural feature and historical landscape.

Community engagement for the esplanade will continue as funding for design and construction becomes available.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Conceptual rendering looking south near East 48th Street

THE UPGRADE AREAS: EAST RIVER PINCH POINT



LOCATION

East 13th Street–East 15th Street (0.1 miles)

GAIN

Potential to serve 5,000 users on weekends

THE NEED

Cyclists and pedestrians who use the Greenway in Lower Manhattan are acutely aware of the narrow stretch between East 13th and East 15th Streets. It was mentioned in the Manhattan Borough President’s 1992 report on the feasibility of a greenway around Manhattan. In 2003, NYSDOT led a project to widen the segment to its present-day condition. The passage is still very narrow—four feet at its narrowest—presenting opportunities for significant upgrades. Although only 0.1 miles long, the site has the potential to serve thousands of users and provide an accessible path.

THE UPGRADE

Upgrades to this area are being developed by the NYCDOT. The preliminary design proposes a bridge above the existing narrow walkway. It would be supported by shafts installed just east of the rightmost northbound FDR Drive lane and extended over the northbound FDR Drive roadway, with ramps into the existing parks to the north and south. This bridge would allow Greenway users to avoid the narrow, uncomfortable path, making this area ADA compliant, accommodating more users, and offering a unique view of the East River. Going forward, coordination with the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project is needed to determine final alignment and design. Community engagement for the potential bridge will continue as funding becomes available.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Conceptual rendering looking south near East 15th Street

THE UPGRADE AREAS: FORT WASHINGTON PARK



LOCATION

West 181st Street–West 186th Street (0.6 miles)

GAIN

Approximately 1.5 acres of new waterfront open space

THE NEED

Upgrading the stretch of the Greenway from West 181st Street to West 186th Street creates an important connection within the Greenway along the Hudson River. The existing upland route, which connects to Fort Washington Park and Riverside Parks to the south, is heavily used. However, the route presents safety and access challenges due to significant grade change, dense tree coverage, and the Henry Hudson Parkway.

With its majestic views of the Hudson River, natural landscape, and George Washington Bridge, a shorefront path is ideal to align with the goals and character of the Greenway. In addition, the Little Red Lighthouse, at the southern end of the site, provides a cultural and historic landmark. A shorefront alignment, however, comes with challenges, including the shoreline's steepness, rocky riverbank, and adjacent rail track.

THE UPGRADE

The recommended Fort Washington Park alignment will connect the Greenway from the footing of the George Washington Bridge to the path at Fort Washington Park North. This will create a direct waterfront connection. Because of the site's challenging terrain, the majority of the path will need to be above water, creating a unique user experience with views of Manhattan's local geology, the George Washington Bridge, and the New Jersey Palisades across the Hudson River. Community engagement for this concept will commence as funding becomes available.



CURRENT CONDITIONS



Conceptual Rendering looking south toward George Washington Bridge

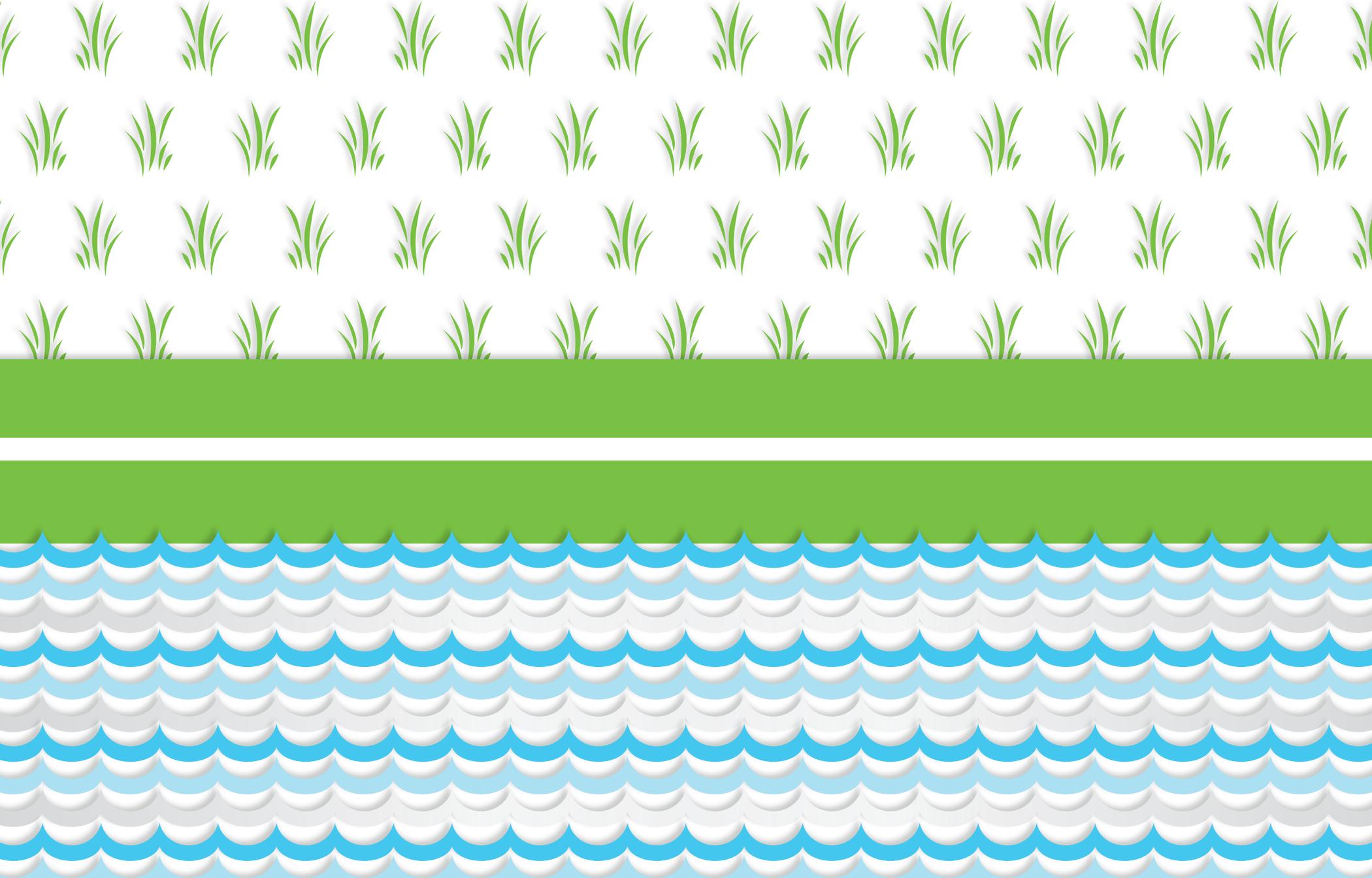
THE CONCLUSION: CLOSING THE LOOP

Connecting the entire Manhattan Waterfront Greenway is an exciting opportunity to complete a historic project for New York City—one that provides a crucial, long-awaited connection for residents and visitors.

As the work continues, we look forward to public conversation to ensure the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway is responsive to community needs.

For additional information or to submit input, please visit

[EDC.NYC/MANHATTANGREENWAY](https://edc.nyc.gov/manhattangreenway)



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