

NEW YORK CITY COMPREHENSIVE WATERFRONT PLAN

Summary of Public Workshops

During the second phase of the public planning process for *Vision 2020*, City Planning held public workshops to work with advocates, residents, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance the waterfront and waterways. The Department held a public workshop in each borough to focus on specific locations and identify opportunities and priorities for each neighborhood. In addition, two more workshops were held to focus on “the Blue Network” – issues that are not specific to any one borough but which affect the whole of the water, including waterborne transportation and recreation, as well as ecology and climate resilience.

Manhattan Workshop

The Manhattan waterfront workshop was held on June 8, 2010 at Murry Bergtraum High School in Lower Manhattan. Each group identified the following primary issues and key priorities for the reach (Reach 1 was divided into Reach 1 North and Reach 1 South):

Reach #1 North (East River Waterfront North, including Randall’s and Ward’s and Roosevelt islands)

- Improving the structural integrity, physical quality, and ongoing maintenance of existing waterfront esplanade.
- Support ongoing efforts to improve Randall’s and Ward’s Islands’ active, passive and natural waterfront open spaces.
- Improve access to waterfront amenities by enhancing upland connections and providing links via ferry.

Reach #1 South (East River Waterfront South)

- Providing continuous access to the waterfront by extending existing public spaces.
- Promoting access to the water itself, through coves or “soft edges.”
- Improving funding for public projects, possibly through public-private partnerships.

Reach #2 (Lower Manhattan, including Governor’s Island)

- Promoting active uses of Piers 13 through 17.
- Providing access into the water wherever possible, but particularly at Battery Park and Battery Park City.
- Enhancing uses of Governors Island, such as for education and playing fields.

Reach #3 (Lower West Side)

- Improving the infrastructure and providing public uses for the piers, particularly 40 and Gansevoort.
- Enhancing in-water recreation and boating facilities.
- Providing more access to waterfront, through pedestrian bridges and public transport.

Reach #4 (Upper West Side)

- Promoting active uses such as restaurants and entertainment at the water’s edge and on piers.
- Providing for long-term maintenance of waterfront infrastructure and open space, especially Riverside Park.
- Developing a waterborne evacuation plan for the area.
- Improving and expanding wayfinding signage, both within waterfront parks and in the city adjacent to the waterfront
- Creating dedicated pedestrian paths that are separate from bicycle traffic.

Reach #5 (Northern Manhattan)

- Improving existing upland connections and provide additional connections to water and waterfront.
- Improving security and public safety along waterfront and adjoining areas.
- Expanding opportunities for maritime uses (i.e., tugboat mooring).
- Developing river as a commercial artery for transport of goods and materials.
- Promoting redevelopment of underutilized waterfront areas and economic development through green jobs.

The Bronx Workshop

The Bronx workshop was held on the evening of Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at Hostos Community College in the Bronx. Each group identified the following primary issues and key priorities for the reach:

Reach #6 (Hudson and Harlem Rivers from the Westchester County border south to 153rd Street)

- Enhancing public access through a continuous greenway.
- Creating more provisions for in-water recreation.

Reach #7 (the South Bronx from 153rd Street to the Bronx River at the Bruckner Expressway Bridge)

- Creating continuous waterfront public access and connecting waterfront public spaces to upland neighborhoods.
- Creating a more active waterfront through new residential and commercial development.
- Managing conflicts between residential neighborhoods and industrial uses.

Reach #8 (the Bronx River, north of the Bruckner Expressway Bridge to the Westchester County Line)

- Improving public access.
- Expanding recreational opportunities along the Bronx River greenway.

Reach #9 (from the east side of the Bruckner Expressway Bridge on the Bronx River to the Westchester County line at Pelham Manor)

- Improving water quality
- Creating more opportunities for public access to the waterfront into the water for recreation and transportation.
- Supporting maritime industry and culture.

Queens Workshop

The Queens waterfront workshop was held on June 2, 2010 at York College in Jamaica. Each group identified the following primary issues and key priorities for the reach (two of the reaches were combined):

Reach #10 and #11 (North Shore and Upper East River)

- Improving public access opportunities and waterfront recreational activities.
- Improving water quality in Flushing Bay.
- Enhancing use of water for freight and passenger transportation.
- Enhancing connections between waterfront resources.

Reach #12 (West Queens)

- Creating more open space on the waterfront and improving connections between waterfront open spaces.
- Promoting waterfront recreational opportunities.

Reach #13 (Newtown Creek)

- Improving water quality.
- Promoting use of water for freight transportation.
- Enhancing access for recreational boating.
- Promoting industrial growth.

Reach #17 (Jamaica Bay)

- Improving access to and ensuring a more consistent maintenance of waterfront recreational areas.
- Improving commuter ferry service.
- Connecting recreational areas in the bay to the ocean.
- Creating a network of publicly accessible waterfront sites and enhancing recreational opportunities along Jamaica Bay.
- Increasing resiliency to climate change and evaluating evacuation strategies.

Brooklyn Workshop

The Brooklyn waterfront workshop was held on May 17th, 2010 at Brooklyn Technical High School in Fort Greene. Each group identified the following primary issues and key priorities for the reach (Reach 14 was broken down into a North and South section because of its length):

Reach #13 (Newtown Creek)

- Promoting industrial growth.
- Enhancing public access.
- Improving water quality.

Reach #14 North (East River waterfront from Newtown Creek south to Atlantic Avenue)

- Improving public access opportunities.
- Creating more natural waterfront spaces.

Reach #14 South (Red Hook and Sunset Park)

- Promoting maritime industry and economic growth.
- Accommodating recreational desires.
- Supporting historic preservation.
- Promoting public health.

Reach #15 (Owl's Head to Seagate, encompassing all of Gravesend Bay)

- Promoting waterfront and in-water recreation.
- Creating more water-based educational opportunities.
- Promoting environmental remediation of land and water.

Reach #16 (Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay east to Plumb Beach)

- Promoting in-water recreational opportunities in the Atlantic Ocean and in Coney Island Creek.
- Supporting environmental remediation.
- Improving transportation options to the waterfront.
- For Plumb Beach, preserving habitat and improving public access.

Reach #17 (Jamaica Bay)

- Improving public access to the waterfront, both from land and from the water.
- Creating more continuity between waterfront public spaces.

Staten Island Workshop

The Staten Island workshop was held on Monday, June 28, 2010 at Wagner College in Staten Island. . Each group identified the following primary issues and key priorities for the reach:

Reach #18 (North Shore)

- Providing continuous public waterfront access in Edgewater/Rosebank
- Improving wayfinding at the St. George ferry terminal to local attractions
- Improving North Shore Promenade and preventing further deterioration

Reach #19, 20, and 21 (South Shore, Arthur Kill South and Arthur Kill North)

- Providing public transit access and finding sources of revenue generation for Fresh Kills Park
- Protecting the South Shore from further erosion through educating homeowners about the permitting process and providing financial incentives
- Creating an integrated transit network of ferry, bus, rail, bicycle, and pedestrians
- Promoting a waterfront nightlife destination for young adults in the Tottenville, Travis or Rossville area.

Reach #22 (Kill Van Kull)

- Balancing industry, commercial, residential, and public access needs
- Developing the Bayonne Bridge reconstruction as a hub for transit connections
- Protecting the shoreline from erosion and climate change through bulkheads and wetlands
- Supporting educational training for recreational boating

Blue Network

In looking beyond the water's edge and into the water itself, *Vision 2020* considers the water bodies that surround the city as one of the central places of the city—physically, economically, culturally, and environmentally. At the June 24th, 2010 workshop, participants divided into three discussion groups that dealt with interconnected issues within the waterways. A description of the three groups and a short summary of the primary issues identified in each group are below.

Use of the Waterways:

This session explored the connections and potential conflicts between Waterborne Recreation, Water Quality and Hydrology, and Transportation. Recreational uses include motorized and human-powered boating, swimming, and fishing, while transportation encompasses passenger transit, such as ferries, water taxis, commercial freight, and emergency access and evacuation planning.

Key priorities identified by the group:

- Overcoming challenges to increase recreational access.
- Providing increased ferry service, including coordination with other forms of transit to provide feeder service to waterborne transportation.
- Improving water quality, and employing innovative solutions such as oyster structures.

Urban Ecology:

This group discussed strategies to achieve a healthier estuary in concert with economic and population growth. We explored how to find “win-win” solutions for improving natural habitats, remediating brownfield sites, and encouraging residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

Key priorities identified by the group:

- Maintaining the commercial waterways through dredging, and finding innovative uses for dredged material.
- Expanding waterfront educational programs.

Climate Resilience:

To begin this conversation, planners from various City agencies presented on the wide range of existing land uses in the waterfront area, the official projections for climate change and sea level rise from the New York City Panel on Climate Change, and opportunities to make waterfront landscapes more resilient.

Potential ideas and strategies identified by the group:

- Adapting existing buildings, and establishing codes and incentives to promote resilience where new construction occurs.
- Creating shoreline protections, such as raising land at the shoreline, forming soft edges, and building multi-purpose infrastructure.
- Engaging the public about living with water, including promoting evacuation preparedness, conducting neighborhood-based discussions about climate resilience.

Blue Network Listening Session

As a follow up to the great discussions at Blue Network workshop, the Department of City Planning held a follow up listening session on July 19, 2010 to hear additional suggestions, ideas and comments on the issues related to the use of the city's waterways for recreation, transit, industry, tourism, and education. We also received ideas for what the city, state, and federal governments can do to help realize this vision.

Major points made by the participants include:

- Advocating for ferry service based on the environmental benefits of water transit as an alternative to driving and the security advantage to being able to use ferries as a means of emergency evacuation.
- Creating standards for pier design to accept vessels, including provisions for historic ships.
- Promoting a regional waterborne goods transportation network.
- Clarifying city, state, and federal waterborne recreation regulations and disseminating accurate information.
- Promoting specific areas as waterborne recreation destinations and enhancing opportunities available there.
- Providing a balance between hard and soft shoreline conditions to increase the city's resilience to flooding.