

## Revitalizing our city's more than 500 miles of waterfront

Written by MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG  
Friday, 22 July 2011 19:30

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ASSEMBLY Speaker Sheldon Silver, city officials and I recently opened the first section of the new East River Waterfront Esplanade just south of the South Street Seaport in Lower Manhattan.

The first phase — from Wall Street to Maiden Lane — is part of a larger \$165 million project that is revitalizing a once neglected two-mile stretch of city-owned land along the water's edge from the tip of Lower Manhattan to East River Park north of the Manhattan Bridge.

The vibrant esplanade will transform the Lower Manhattan and Lower East Side waterfronts into a pedestrian-friendly new public open space destination with sweeping views across the East River and New York Harbor.

Upon completion of the larger project in 2013, the two-mile esplanade will provide a contiguous pedestrian walkway and a bicycle pathway along the East River from Battery Park to East River Park.

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The new East River Waterfront Esplanade is the newest jewel on New York City's magnificent Harbor.

One of the goals of the waterfront plan we unveiled earlier this year is to reconnect New Yorkers to New York City's more than 500 miles of waterfront and make it part of their everyday lives, and the new esplanade will help do that for Lower Manhattan's tens of thousands of residents, 300,000 plus workers and millions of visitors.

When complete in full, the two-mile esplanade will extend the green space around Manhattan's waterfront that includes Riverside Park, Hudson River Park on the West Side, Battery Park at Lower Manhattan's tip, and East River Park on the East Side.

The new esplanade — open to the public from 6 a.m. to midnight — provides a place for residents, office workers and visitors to Lower Manhattan to enjoy the waterfront.

Along the new esplanade are plantings and trees comprised of native coastal species, as well as seating elements evocative of the area's maritime past.

Elevated bar stool seating offers visitors an opportunity to sit next to the railing and look out over the water toward Brooklyn.

The railing at the bar also doubles as a tabletop on which users can eat, use a laptop or read.

The esplanade also features chaise lounges, game tables, planter walls and waterside benches.

The "Look-Out," a series of stadium-like steps leading to the water at the foot of Wall Street, enables visitors to sit and observe the water with unobstructed views.

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A new state-of-the-art dog park features a climbing bridge, sand pit, splash pad and dog house.

The entire esplanade is unified by a newly installed purple girder underneath the FDR Drive that will be illuminated at night and visible over the esplanade and across the river.

The esplanade stretches to Pier 11 at Wall Street, one of the stops on the City's new East River Ferry Service launched in June 2011.

The new service will provide year-round ferry transportation between East 34th Street and Pier 11 in Manhattan, Long Island City in Queens, Greenpoint, North Williamsburg, South Williamsburg, and DUMBO in Brooklyn.

This East River Waterfront Esplanade is part of the Waterfront Vision and Enhancement Strategy, a sustainable blueprint for New York City's waterfront and waterways launched in May 2011.

To reconnect New Yorkers and visitors to the water and reclaim New York City's standing as a premier waterfront city, the plan will transform the city's waterfront with new parks, new industrial activities and new housing, and it will capitalize on the city's waterways to promote water-borne transportation, recreation, maritime activity and natural habitats.

The plan has two components: a three-year action agenda comprised of 130 funded projects, including the development of more than 50 acres of new waterfront parks, creation of 14 new waterfront esplanades and introduction of new commuter ferry service; and the Vision 2020: New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, a framework for the city's 520 miles of shoreline for the next decade and beyond.

The 130 action agenda projects are expected to create 13,000 construction jobs and at least 3,400 permanent maritime and industrial jobs.

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It is the first citywide plan for the waterfront in nearly two decades and the first ever comprehensive plan for the waterways themselves.