

WATERFRONT VISION PLAN

Astoria & Long Island City, Queens



A Waterfront Vision For The Community By The Community
Developed With Green Shores NYC & The Trust For Public Land

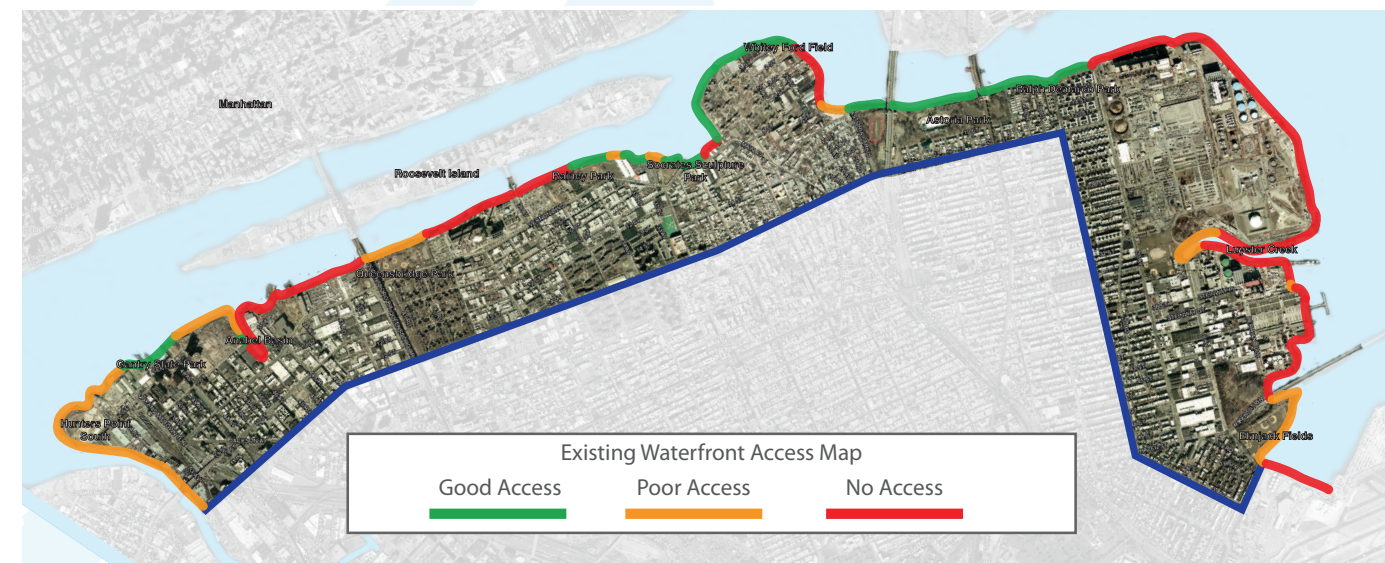


The Waterfront

The East River shoreline in Western Queens is one of the few major waterfront stretches in New York City where community access is not blocked by a highway or railroad. Historically, residents of Astoria and Long Island City have been cut off from their local waterfront by manufacturing, industry and utilities—with much of New York City's electricity being generated on the banks of the Queens East River.

As manufacturing moved out of New York City, stretches of shoreline that were once inaccessible because of industry have now been developed for residential use, thus providing waterfront access that has not been possible for generations.

Despite new waterfront development, only 27% of the 8 miles of waterfront that stretch between Newtown Creek and Bowery Bay is currently publicly accessible.



With new development comes growth and as the population increases so does the vital necessity for open green space. Unfortunately, waterfront parks and infrastructure have not kept pace with the needs of local communities. Many of the parks in Western Queens are poorly connected to the waterfront and not well-linked to one another. Shockingly, only 3% of Astoria has dedicated park space, (compared to the citywide average of 14%), while the Upper Ditmars neighborhood is almost completely cut off from its own waterfront.

New York City is in the midst of a vibrant waterfront renaissance where residents, elected officials and community groups are leading the charge for a greater connection and access to our rivers. In Astoria and Long Island City the call for waterfront green space is growing louder as community members head to the river for recreation, relaxation, entertainment and education. "It's Our Waterfront" and now is the time to ensure its future is green, clean and accessible to all.

The Process

Hundreds of Astoria and Long Island City residents came together in the summer and fall of 2010 to participate in seven neighborhood listening sessions and two area-wide brainstorming sessions, generating more than a thousand comments, ideas and solutions for creating a more connected, useful and beautiful waterfront.

The community identified three principles to guide its waterfront vision: a 21st-century waterfront (an active, user-friendly and accessible waterfront with facilities for activities and programs); a healthy and vibrant waterfront (an environment where natural landscapes, habitats and water resources are protected and enhanced); and a connected waterfront (a continuous, accessible waterfront from Newtown Creek to Bowery Bay).

Visit www.greenshoresnyc.org for workshop photos, maps, presentations and more information about the proposals. Stay informed and get involved.



The Plan

Connected

Recommendations to connect people to the waterfront and connect waterfront spaces and neighborhoods to one another.

A continuous, landscaped, and accessible waterfront greenway from Newtown Creek to Bowery Bay would connect waterfront spaces and provide waterfront access from inland areas. The following areas of the greenway need improvement: The Pulaski Bridge, Vernon Blvd, Hallets Point, access at Shore Towers, Shore Blvd and connections to Luyster Creek and Elmjack fields.

Bike-share programs, bicycle parking and cycling tours will encourage greenway usage. MTA bus routes along the waterfront or providing access to the waterfront from inland areas need to be improved.



Healthy & Vibrant

Recommendations to enhance/protect the natural landscapes and environmental resources along the waterfront, and promote the river as an educational and recreational resource



The community wants a healthy and vibrant waterfront with more green space and use of the East River as an educational and recreational resource. New facilities and increased programming will enable residents to learn about and enjoy the river.



Residents value sustainability and wish to preserve wildlife habitats and use indigenous plants or xeriscape landscaping that requires less water and care. Residents want more shade trees along park pathways and seating areas, natural grass fields in the new Hunters Point South Park and wherever else possible, and safe and easy access to the water.

21st Century

Recommendations to create, improve, and maintain user-friendly facilities, amenities and infrastructure along the waterfront.



Astoria-LIC residents want a clean, user-friendly 21st-century waterfront with better lighting, attractive seating and tables, additional comfort stations and water fountains, accessible pathways, and public art installations.

Residents would like their parks to have more picnic tables and concessions offering affordable and healthy food and drinks.



Year-round events and activities should take place in existing parks field houses, and a new environmental education center and new events facilities at Astoria Park, Whitey Ford Field and Queensbridge Park would allow for even more programming. Residents feel that well-maintained public spaces tend to be safer; pathways, lighting, benches and railings need to be well-maintained, and community-led cleanup efforts supported. More trash cans and recycling bins and increased enforcement of litter rules will help keep the waterfront more appealing.

Project Sponsors

This plan resulted from a community visioning process, which included seven listening sessions held in different neighborhoods throughout Astoria and Long Island City, Queens, as well as two planning meetings to help finalize recommendations. The sponsors thank the many Green Shores NYC members who helped convene and facilitate the listening sessions and workshops. We are also grateful to Councilmembers Peter Vallone Jr and Jimmy Van Bramer, as well as Community Board 1-Queens, for their active participation.

Generous support for this plan was provided to The Trust for Public Land by The J.M. Kaplan Fund, The New York Community Trust, and Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

The sponsors of this process are:

Green Shores NYC -- An all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization which works to enliven the Astoria-Long Island City waterfront by caring and advocating for safe public parks, green spaces, waterways, and a waterfront greenway
www.greenshoresnyc.org

The Trust for Public Land -- A national organization conserving land for people
www.tpl.org





2 QUEENSBRIDGE PARK SEAWALL

Restore waterfront access in Queensbridge Park by repairing the seawall. Create natural wetlands and an attractive esplanade with space for relaxing, fishing and enjoying the magnificent view.



1 PULASKI BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

Improve connections between the waterfront communities of Hunters Point, Queens, and Greenpoint, Brooklyn, by making the Pulaski Bridge safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. Reconfigure the entrance/exit ramps, expand the pedestrian/bike lane and improve bridge signage.

WATERFRONT VISION PLAN ASTORIA - LONG ISLAND CITY

A WATERFRONT VISION BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPED WITH GREEN SHORES NYC
AND THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND



- Major Proposal Site
- Greenway
- Boat Launch

3 RAINEY PARK TO HALLETS COVE

Use modest design interventions to create an uninterrupted stretch of continuous waterfront linking Rainey Park, the Costco Esplanade, Socrates Sculpture Park and Halletts Cove.

4 NEW HALLETS PIER

Transfer the city-owned pier in Halletts Cove to the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and renovate it to provide spaces for relaxing, fishing, and enjoying the view; boat storage, and boat launch access.

5 TWO COVES CORRIDOR

Improve waterfront access along the Two Coves Corridor, linking Halletts Cove, the Astoria Houses Esplanade, Whitey Ford Field and Pot Cove. Ensure that any new residential development provides attractive and continuous access.

6 ASTORIA PARK SHORELINE

Make the Astoria Park Shoreline more inviting for pedestrians, with a wider, well-landscaped esplanade. Explore traffic calming measures to ensure a safer and more enjoyable waterfront experience for all users.



7 LUYSER CREEK

Transfer the shoreline of Luyster Creek along the end of 19th Avenue from the New York City Department of Transportation to the Department of Parks and Recreation in order to provide green space and waterfront access to Upper Ditmars. Create public viewing areas, safe water access, boat storage and launch facilities.

