

PlaNYC 2030 Regional Parks

High Bridge

Design Start:	February 2010
Design Completion:	December 2011
Construction Start:	August 2012
Anticipated Construction Completion:	Summer 2014
Total Budget:	\$47,850,000 City / \$13,880,000 grants \$61,730,000 total

Project Location

The High Bridge and approaches, located within Highbridge Park, Manhattan and Highbridge Park, Bronx. Manhattan cross streets: Amsterdam Avenue and 173rd Street. Bronx cross streets: University Avenue and 170th Street.

Landmark

City landmark, National Register listed, National Historic Landmark (part of Old Croton Aqueduct)

Project Objectives

- Rehabilitate and reopen the High Bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists, using historic preservation methods
- Provide safety and accessibility improvements
- Restore the connection between the boroughs of the Bronx and Manhattan; improve access to parks and park facilities
- Highlight the history and beauty of the City's oldest standing bridge

Project History

The High Bridge is part of the Old Croton Aqueduct (1838-1842), the brick water conduit that brought New York City its earliest supply of clean water. The Aqueduct was designed to slope gently, moving water entirely by gravity through 41 miles of countryside from the Croton River in Westchester County to Manhattan Island. It crossed the Harlem River on the High Bridge, the best-known structure of this pioneering water supply project, in pipes that still lie beneath the walkway of the bridge. The Croton Aqueduct served the city from 1842 until 1958, carrying nearly 100 million gallons a day at its peak. Its pure, plentiful water brought the ravages of fire and disease under control and helped the city to expand rapidly. The High Bridge was transferred to the Parks Department in 1960 after the decommissioning of the aqueduct. It is the city's oldest standing bridge.



Designed on principles of Roman aqueduct architecture, the bridge is 116 feet in height and 1,200 feet from end to end, with the undersides of its arches 100 feet above the Harlem River. The High Bridge was begun in 1839 and completed in 1848. Larger water pipes were added in 1862, but the bridge remained largely unchanged until 1927. In that year, the city replaced five of the original 15 arches with a central steel span to ease the passage of large ships. The rest of the majestic stone arches still stand, mainly on the Bronx side of the river. The bridge has never carried vehicular traffic.

Upon its opening in 1848, the High Bridge, with its beautiful arches spanning the river between steep, wooded banks, quickly achieved fame as an attraction for New Yorkers and tourists, and as a favorite subject for artists and photographers. Amusement parks and restaurants opened nearby as the bridge became a popular promenade for strollers and an important crossing for Bronx and Manhattan neighborhood residents. The bridge has been closed since the early 1970's.

Thanks to the support of Mayor Bloomberg, the restoration of the High Bridge has become an initiative of the City's PlaNYC vision for a greener, greater New York.

Scope of Work

- Repair brick walkway deck, including supporting structural arches and tie rods
- Repoint and repair stone masonry arches
- Repair, strengthen, and repaint steel arch
- Design and construct new safety fencing; restore historic hand railings
- Design and construct new bicycle- and ADA-accessible ramps on walkway deck
- Clean stone arches and provide decorative lighting

