

BROOKLYN- QUEENS GREENWAY GUIDE



City of New York Parks & Recreation
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Introduction

The Brooklyn-Queens Greenway (BQG) is a 40-mile, continuous pedestrian and cyclist route from Coney Island in Brooklyn to Fort Totten, on the Long Island Sound, in Queens.

The Brooklyn-Queens Greenway provides an active and engaging way of exploring these two lively and diverse boroughs. The BQG presents the cyclist or pedestrian with a wide range of amenities, cultural offerings, and urban experiences—linking 13 parks, two botanical gardens, the New York Aquarium, the Brooklyn Museum, the New York Hall of Science, two environmental education centers, four lakes, and numerous ethnic and historic neighborhoods. The guidebook also provides information about nearby public transportation, restrooms, places to eat, and bike shops.

The Brooklyn-Queens Greenway is part of the larger New York City Greenway System, an interconnected network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways linking parks and communities throughout the five boroughs. The Department of City Planning's 1993, *A Greenway Master Plan for New York City*, which outlined 350 miles of potential trails, noted that greenways are "...at once the parks for the 21st century and a part of the transportation infrastructure, providing for pleasant, efficient, healthful, and environmentally sound travel by foot, bicycle or skates."

New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks) works closely with the Departments of Transportation and City Planning on the planning and implementation of the City's Greenway Network. Parks has jurisdiction and maintains over 100 miles of greenways for commuting and recreational use, and continues to plan, design, and construct additional greenway segments in each borough, utilizing City capital funds and a number of federal transportation grants.

In 1987, the Neighborhood Open Space Coalition spearheaded the concept of the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, building on the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, and Robert Moses in their creations of the great parkways and parks of Brooklyn and Queens. Feasibility and design studies were completed in 1988 with the help of many City agencies and civic and community groups. Recent City administrations have seen fit to further this vision of a chain of green from shore to shore, and today, the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway forms a critical component of the City's Greenway system.

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Coney Island

1

Length: 5.5 miles (loop)
Estimated travel time: Biking—45 minutes; Walking—3 hours
Attractions: Coney Island Beach and Boardwalk, Keyspan Park, Nathan’s Famous, Asser Levy/Seaside Park, Astroland Amusement Park (slated to close at the end of 2007 or 2008 summer season), Abe Stark Skating Rink, Parachute Jump, Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park, The Cyclone Rollercoaster, Brighton Beach, The New York Aquarium, Coney Island Museum & Sideshow

Character: Surf Avenue is a busy commercial street with no marked bike lane and plenty of distracted drivers. The boardwalk is a well-used, auto-free pedestrian route. Bikes are allowed on the boardwalk between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Directions at a Glance

Starting at the end of Ocean Parkway

- 0.0 **Mile**
Travel towards the right, west, on Surf Avenue.
- 1.9
Turn left on 37th Street.
- 1.95
Turn left onto Riegelmann Boardwalk (Between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., cyclists must dismount and walk their bikes on boardwalk. For alternate bike route see below.)
- 4.6
At the end of the boardwalk, turn around and backtrack.
- 5.4
Veer right onto Seabreeze Walk.
- 5.5
End at Ocean Parkway at Seabreeze Avenue.

Coney Island Alternate Bike Route

When the boardwalk is closed to cyclists, follow this route. Instead of turning left onto West 37th Street, turn right onto West 37th Street and ride to Neptune Avenue. Turn right onto Neptune Avenue and ride to Ocean Parkway. Turn left onto Ocean Parkway to pick up the next segment of the Greenway.



CONEY ISLAND

Subways

The D, F, N, and Q lines all stop at Coney Island. (For the latest transit information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

Go past the Wonder Wheel for take-away hotdogs, corn on the cob, fried clams and other classic American fast food. In Brighton Beach, you can pay a little bit more and get a sit-down meal at several boardwalk cafés.

Public Restrooms



There is a restroom near West 27th Street and Surf Avenue. The boardwalk has public restrooms at West 30th Street, Stillwell Avenue, West 8th Street, and Brighton 2nd Street. They are open Memorial Day to Labor Day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Area History

Coney Island is no longer a true island. When European settlers first arrived, it was a narrow sliver of land, separated from the rest of Long Island by a salty creek that was crossable at low tide. Coney Island's name comes from the Dutch name "Konign Eisland" or Rabbit Island. The reasons for the name are lost in the murk of time. It could be that the original grasslands and scrub here supported a hopping colony of long ears.

Development began in 1829, upon completion of the Coney Island Hotel



Wonder Wheel: The ferris wheel with the roller coaster on the inside. When the inside car swings out, many a stomach has been left behind.

in the area now known as Sea Gate. This was a respectable establishment, but by the turn of the nineteenth century, Coney Island had become New York's wild west, an area notorious for its rowdy drinking and gambling halls, prize fights, and rampant prostitution. Respectable society had moved east. The era's most wealthy and celebrated flocked to Manhattan Beach, where majestic hotels lined the beach. The prosperous middle class summered at Brighton Beach, where the architecture was impressive, but less grand.

West Brighton was the buffer zone between the high and low-life. This was the destination for day-tripping, working class folks who came by steamship, ferry, or trolley to sing in the beer halls, eat in the enormous restaurants, shake a leg in the dance halls, and try their luck in the penny arcade. This is the section of the beach that became the Coney Island of popular imagination, especially with the advent of pioneering amusement parks: Steeplechase in 1897, Luna Park in 1903, and Dreamland in 1904. These were ambitious creations, forerunners to today's Disneyland and

Six Flags parks. For a dime, you were admitted to fanciful exotic villages, crowded as any Lower East Side street, where every twist in the way brought another enticement to spend some fun money on a ride, a show, a game, or a dance.

As the twentieth century wore on, these amusement parks lost much of their novelty. They disappeared in reverse order of their completion. Dreamland burnt to the ground in 1911; it took a series of fires in the 1940s to close down Luna Park. Steeplechase Park didn't close until 1964. But the three decades from 1920 to 1950 were arguably Coney Island's heyday. On a hot summer weekend afternoon, thousands of New Yorkers would take the subway to partake of Coney Island at its most elemental: sand, surf, and Nathan's hot dogs.

With the rise of the automobile, Coney Island's primacy waned, with

thousands making the trek to Long Island and New Jersey beaches instead. Some would say that this was a relief. The well-known photographer, Weegee, published three famous pictures—one each in 1940, 1945, and 1952 showing thousands of beachgoers packed shoulder to shoulder. Today, however, Surf Avenue and the Coney Island boardwalk remain a lively scene, a favorite trip for many New Yorkers. Significant changes within Coney Island are anticipated with the area's planned redevelopment, guided by a strategic plan that was unveiled for the area in 2005. The plan focuses on creating new housing and strengthening the area as a year-round entertainment destination with seaside attractions.

Trip Description

The trip starts at the corner of Surf Avenue and Ocean Parkway. Most people will be tempted to head



Thrills: Coney Island art tends toward the brightly colored Macabre.

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Nathan's: A table for four without the table

straight to the Boardwalk, which has many entrances beckoning from Surf Avenue. But Surf Avenue is also well worth exploring in its own right, with many star attractions and a lively pedestrian scene. For bike riders, Surf Avenue offers an opportunity to stay mounted and rolling when the boardwalk is closed to bike riding.

Heading west on Surf Avenue, you'll quickly notice **Asser Levy/Seaside Park**. The centerpiece of this park is its amphitheater, whose stage is crowned by a high-tech white tent. Information on amphitheater events can be found on the Parks & Recreation website, www.nyc.gov/parks. The park provides a nice refuge from the hurly-burly of the surrounding streets and the boardwalk, for those just seeking some good old-fashioned green grass and shade.

The world-famous **Cyclone** roller-coaster stands proud at West 10th Street. Don't let the wood and the antique looks fool you—the ride is as much fun as any of the high-tech theme park extravaganzas in the suburbs.

The zone between West 12th and West 16th Streets is the haunt of the outrageous. The happening corner here is West 12th Street and Surf Avenue, where you'll find the **Coney Island Sideshow**. This modest showhouse is dedicated to keeping alive the thrilling underbelly of Americana—besides the sideshow, the venue hosts regular burlesque and rock-and-roll shows. Hours of operation can be found at www.coneyisland.com for both the Sideshow and Museum.

Look no further than the **Coney Island Museum** at 1208 Surf Avenue

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for photographs and artifacts from the resort area's yesteryears. Up for a game of chance and/or skill? You can try your hand in the amusement arcades along this stretch of avenue.

Moving along, you'll go from honky-tonk to spiffy family fun. The old site of Steeplechase Park is occupied by Keyspan Park, a minor league baseball stadium that is home to the Brooklyn Cyclones. Visit www.brooklyncyclones.com for game and event schedules.

The **Abe Stark Skating Rink** stands at the corner of West 19th Street and Surf Avenue. If you want to take a spin on the ice, this pro-quality facility is open

to the public on weekends and school holidays from the Beginning of October to the beginning of April. Other times it's used by ice hockey leagues. Don't have a pair of skates? No problem—you can rent them here.

After Keyspan Park, Surf Avenue becomes a residential area, a zone of housing developments and assisted-living facilities. One worthy detour is the Santos White Community Garden at 2110 Mermaid Avenue. Turn right at West 21st Street, and go up one block. This garden looks great anytime of year.

Turn left on West 37th Street to reach the boardwalk (or right for the



Sunset at Coney Island Beach

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Coney Island skyline

alternative bike route).

The Coney Island boardwalk is true New York, not just for its legend, but for its here-and-now, quick-change transformations. On a summer weekend, the entire two-and-a-half mile stretch is a crowded blur of good-natured pleasure seekers. The boardwalk's varied qualities shine forth best midweek or in the off-season, when the crowds have thinned. The boardwalk's one true and constant companion is the beach, a well-kept stretch of sand punctuated by several stone jetties and a fishing pier. In fact, some pedestrians might be tempted to skip the boardwalk and walk the entire length of the beach.

The boardwalk is quietest near its western terminus at West 37th Street. For beach and ocean lovers, this is the place to come if you're seeking a little more solitude, especially early in the morning or on a nippy winter day.

Coney Island's iconic **Parachute**

Jump, rises near West 19th Street. At 262 feet, the Parachute Jump is Coney Island's most distinctive landmark. It was first installed at the New York World's Fair of 1939-40 at Flushing Meadows in Queens, then moved in 1941 to its present location. When it was operating, riders were lifted by a cable to the top then dropped, to float gently down to the ground. The Parachute Jump ceased operating in 1964, and fell into disrepair. It recently underwent a \$5 million refurbishment. While it no longer functions as a ride, it remains an icon of Coney Island history.

Steeplechase Pier juts out into the ocean across from the West 16th Street walkway. This is a popular spot for anglers and those who just want to get out over the water. You'll probably find the beach starting to become a bit more crowded here.

Moving past the back end of Keyspan Park, you will arrive at the Coney Island of popular legend, a zone of

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rambunctious amusements. **Astroland** is the heart of the scene here.

Astroland was opened in 1962 and, as its name implies, many of the park's original rides took their cue from the era's space program. These days you're more likely to hear hip-hop rather than doo-wop, but you can still ride smiling satellites and rockets to the moon. Astroland was recently purchased by a private developer and is anticipated to close at the end of the 2007 or 2008 summer season. Want to get up higher than anybody? Buy a ticket to **Deno's Wonder Wheel**, an immense Ferris wheel at the foot of West 12th Street.

The New York Aquarium at Coney Island is the next stop along the boardwalk. This is not a sideshow attraction, but a world-class zoological facility. The Aquarium covers 14 acres, is home to 350 species of aquatic wildlife, including penguins, sharks, and seals, and is a terrific place for

families. For information, visit www.nyaquarium.com.

Brighton Beach fronts the boardwalk between Asser Levy/Seaside Park and Corbin Place. Today, Brighton Beach is a neighborhood of Russian émigrés; some have called it Little Odessa, after a town in the Ukraine on the Black Sea. On a warm day, the boardwalk here sports plenty of folks wearing bathing suits and sunglasses. But the boardwalk is also a European-style promenade, the route of dressed up folks walking arm in arm with shined shoes and perfect hairdos. If you appreciate the beauty of the ocean, but can do without gritty beach culture, this is the perfect destination.

Boardwalk cafés invite you to sit down and watch this parade go by while you enjoy a selection from the Russian/English menu.

Backtrack on the boardwalk to a stairway known as Seabreeze Walk, which



Brighton Beach fruit stand

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Ocean Parkway

2

Length:
Estimated travel time:
Attractions:

5.9 miles (one way)
Biking—45 minutes; Walking—2 hours
Gravesend Cemetery, residential neighborhoods of Manhattan Terrace, Ocean Parkway, Borough Park, and Ditmas Park

Character:

Sheltered historic parkway with cross traffic at intersections.

Directions at a Glance

Starting at corner of Ocean Parkway and Surf Avenue

Mile

- 0.0 Start on Ocean Parkway where it meets Seabreeze Avenue. Head north on Ocean Parkway staying on the left, (western) side, of the parkway.
- 5.1 Follow Ocean Parkway to Church Avenue. Bicyclists must keep to the bike lane.
- 5.3 At southwest corner of Church Avenue, cross Ocean Parkway to eastern side. Cross Church Avenue to northeast corner, then cross service road to bike/pedestrian path.
- 5.7 Follow path as it curves towards the east.
- 5.75 Path ends. Cross East 8th Street. Turn left.
- 5.8 Turn right at Park Circle. Follow circle counter-clockwise to entrance of Prospect Park.
- 5.9 End at the park entrance.



Hand in Hand: Some moments are too good for cycling.

OCEAN PARKWAY

Subways

The F, Q and B (the B train does not operate on weekends) trains each make several stops on streets parallel to Ocean Parkway. (For the latest transit information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

Ocean Parkway is almost completely residential, however, you can find businesses, including neighborhood restaurants and grocery stores, on many of the intersecting streets. Neptune Avenue, and Avenues U, P, N, I, J, Kings Highway, Ditmas Avenue, and Church Avenue are especially bustling. The Assyrian-Jewish shopping center at the corner of East 3rd Street and Kings Highway is a great place to shop for middle-eastern specialties. Avenue J is the spot for kosher restaurants and bakeries. One of the best pizzerias in the city, DiFara's Pizza, is located on Avenue J and East 15th Street.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms can be found: in Grady Playground near Brighton 4th Road and Brighton 4th Street; in the Colonel David Marcus Memorial Playground near East 5th Street and Avenue P; in Friends Field Park near East 4th Street and Avenue L; in Di Glio Playground near McDonald Avenue and Avenue F and at the Parade Grounds near Prospect Park.



OCEAN PARKWAY



Ocean Parkway on a summer day

Area History

Conceived by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1866, Ocean Parkway was to be one of the four legs of a parkway system radiating out from Prospect Park. Only two of the legs were built: Eastern Parkway and Ocean Parkway, finished in 1880. The parkways were inspired by the boulevards of Paris and Berlin, but leave it to Americans to make them wider and longer.

The Olmsted/Vaux parkways were designed to be both scenic and practical. The main thoroughfare, the carriage drive, was originally conceived as a "shaded pleasure drive," but now functions as a busy roadway. Shaded, grassy malls buffer both sides of the drive. Here's where you'll find the bike and pedestrian paths and long rows of benches. Service roads line the outer edge of the parkway, providing safe access and parking.

In 1894, a strip of Ocean Parkway's pedestrian lane became the country's first bicycle path. Reportedly, so many bicyclists crowded the path on opening day, the city was forced to widen it. In 1983, the National Park Service declared Ocean Parkway a National Scenic Landmark. Traveling along Ocean Parkway is more about the pleasure of the whole route, rather than any particular "sights" along the way. It is about the trees and the grass that provide a green counterpoint to a hodge-podge of twentieth-century New York buildings, from luxury apartments to substantial single-family houses, plus a few synagogues, schools, and other institutions. The architecture ranges from solid brick pre-war cooperative housing to contemporary single-family residences. Along the way are some surprising details, including the entrance arch to 270 Ocean Parkway, which is pure 1960s Miami Beach.

OCEAN PARKWAY

It's the people who make Ocean Parkway interesting. On a busy weekend day, you'll encounter hundreds. Typical users include Orthodox Jewish families walking on the Sabbath, Russian retirees reading Cyrillic-printed newspapers, and many, many other walkers, bikers, bladers, and sit-on-a-bench-and-watch-the-world-go-byers.

Trip Description

Ocean Parkway starts a block away from the Coney Island boardwalk. The bike path runs along the western mall of the parkway. Don't let the trees and the grass lull you into complacency at intersections, however. Cars making right-hand turns off of Ocean Parkway can be unaware that bicyclists and pedestrians are crossing the street alongside of them. So look twice, then look again.

After a couple of blocks, the on- and off-ramps of the Belt Parkway interrupt the flow of Ocean Parkway. Fortunately for bicyclists, the authorized route is fairly well-signed. Just remember to stay on the western side of the parkway, and you'll be fine. The eastern side is reserved for pedestrians only.

After the Belt Parkway, it's a straight shot through middle-class Brooklyn to Church Avenue, where the parkway ends. A couple of worthwhile meanders will reveal both the contemporary life in the neighborhoods surrounding Ocean Parkway, as well as the deep historical roots of Brooklyn.

Just north of Coney Island is a small area whose grid system of streets is at odd angles to the neighborhood around it. This is what remains of the old town of Gravesend, a village founded in 1643 by a group of English

The Boardwalk near Ocean Parkway where this greenway segment begins.



OCEAN PARKWAY

settlers lead by Lady Deborah Moody. By all accounts, Lady Moody was both cultured and fiercely independent. She became the first female grantee for land ownership in the New World. **Gravesend** was the only permanent settlement in early colonial America planned and directed by a woman. The outlines of the original village design are still easily discernible on the map: look for a large square set at a counter-angle to the surrounding grid. The square is bisected on each side, forming four smaller squares. The village graveyard, perhaps the most visible remnant of old Gravesend, sits at the outside corner of one of the smaller squares, at the intersection of Van Sicklen Street and Village Road South. The graveyard is closed to the public, but you can peek in through the fence. To explore Gravesend, take a left on Avenue V.

Kings Highway crosses Ocean Parkway a block past Avenue R. Kings Highway is another exception to Brooklyn's grid system, running roughly south to northeast. This was an old Native American path, then later a farm road. During the American Revolution, British troops marched up Kings Highway, to present day East New York, to attack American forces.

Olmsted and Vaux designed Ocean Parkway to extend all the way to the entrance to Prospect Park but with the construction of the Prospect Expressway, a brain child of Robert Moses, Ocean Parkway (as a park-

way) ends abruptly at Church Avenue.

When you come to Church Avenue, cross Ocean Parkway to the right, and make a left across Church Avenue. The path continues on Ocean Parkway, which becomes a service road at this point, running alongside the Prospect Expressway. The bike path ends near the pedestrian bridge at East 8th Street, but the service road continues to Park Circle. Follow Park Circle counter-clockwise to the Prospect Park entrance (between the two horse statues, called the *Horse Tamers*).



Prospect Park

3

Length: 1.6 miles for half loop, 3.2 miles for the entire park loop

Estimated travel time: Biking—15 minutes; Walking—1 hour, suggest 2-3 hours to explore.

Attractions: Parade Ground, Prospect Lake, Wollman Rink, Audubon Center at the Boathouse, Prospect Park Zoo, Lefferts Homestead, Carousel, Bandshell, Third Street Playground, Battle Pass, Harmony Playground, Vale of Cashmere, Tennis House, Concert Grove

Character: Asphalt road throughout the park that is auto-free on weekends and non-rush hours.

Directions at a Glance

Starting at Park Circle entrance to Prospect Park



Mile

- 0.0 Follow Park Circle into Prospect Park, passing Parade Ground on your right.
- 0.1 Turn right onto South Lake Drive. Follow South Lake Drive towards Grand Army Plaza. Veer right to park exit road.
- 1.6 End at Grand Army Plaza.

If you are traveling the Greenway from North to South, enter the Park at Grand Army Plaza, turn onto West Drive. Follow West Drive to the Park Circle exit.

Grand Army Plaza



Subways

To get to Park Circle, take the F train to Ft. Hamilton Parkway or the Q to Parkside Avenue. To get to Grand Army Plaza take the 2 or 3. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

There are several food kiosks within the park as well as Song Bird Cafe in the Boathouse. Outside the park, Park Slope’s Seventh Avenue, Windsor Terrace’s Prospect Park West and Flatbush Avenue have a wide variety of restaurants and several grocery stores.

PROSPECT PARK



Prospect Park Boathouse

Public Restrooms

Prospect Park has several public restrooms which are open daily from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Restrooms can also be found within the Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library.

Area History

Frederick Law Olmsted's and Calvert Vaux's first foray into New York City was designing Manhattan's Central Park in 1858. Then they took what they had learned and designed Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

Prospect Park takes its name from Mount Prospect, which lies on the other side of Flatbush Avenue from the park. The borough fathers had originally intended Mount Prospect to be part of Prospect Park. But Calvert Vaux convinced them that Flatbush Avenue would be a marring disruption. Luckily, tracts of land to

the south of their allocated parcels were available for purchase, and the 526-acre diamond outline of Prospect Park was born. The park was laid out in 1866 and 1867.

The land had a significant Revolutionary War history. Look for **Battle Pass** on the East Drive just north of the zoo (look for the plaque). This is the site of one of the major actions in the Battle of Brooklyn, which was the first battle between the United Colonies and the British, following the issuance of the Declaration of Independence. At this spot on August 27, 1776, British forces overwhelmed some 900 Americans under the command of Major-General John Sullivan. After the Americans surrendered, some 500 were killed by Scot Highlanders, German Hessians and English infantry and cavalry.

For information on upcoming events within Prospect Park, stop at any

PROSPECT PARK

entrance sign where there are maps and up-to-date program information, visit the Prospect Park website at www.prospectpark.org, or contact the Prospect Park Alliance at 718-965-8999.

On weekends and outside of rush hour, Prospect Park is auto-free. Most of your company will be huffing, puffing joggers and serious racing bicyclists. Don't use them as an example. Instead, experience the Park at a leisurely pace, much as you would inside a horse-driven carriage on a no-rush Sunday afternoon. Open up your senses, and see the unfolding views as a series of panoramic pictures.

Trip Description

The following trip description starts at Park Circle.

You will see the **Parade Ground** at this location which has bathrooms, a snackbar, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts and soccer and baseball fields.

After you pass Park Circle, you can't miss the Peristyle, also known as the Grecian Shelter, on your right. Designed by McKim, Mead & White in the neoclassical style with columns, the structure both shelters and punctuates the landscape.

Rounding another bend, you'll be on East Lake Drive which climbs steadily past **Wollman Rink** into the Midwood section of the park. But don't miss the Prospect Park **Audubon Center**, (www.prospect-parkaudubon.org) housed in the Boathouse, which lies behind some trees just past **Concert Grove**. The center has nature exhibits and an idyllic esplanade along the tiny



In the shade of giants: A young tree near Prospect Lake survives and waits for an opening to the sky.



A family enjoys a day in the sun at Prospect Park's Long Meadow.

Lullwater Lake—well worth a stop.

The **Prospect Park Zoo** is another worthwhile stop for nature-lovers. Its presence in the park is muted, but you'll notice its back boundary nestled into the outer edge of the Midwood. The Prospect Park Zoo is open all summer and spring weekends and has lots of great activities as well as a bathroom and snackbar. For more information go to www.prospectparkzoo.com.

You'll find the entrance to the zoo on Flatbush Avenue if you take the park road exit by the Boathouse and then turn left. If you do this, you'll pass **Lefferts Homestead**, a restored Dutch Farmhouse built in 1777, and the festive **Carousel**.

Back on the drive in the park, you'll really start to climb as you venture further into the Midwood, the shady

heart of the park's wild forest. Take it slow and let the world pass you by. You'll be having a much better time. To your left will be a steep wooded slope, the backside of the terminal moraine that forms the backbone of the park.

Relief will be in sight as you reach the northern end of the Long Meadow. You'll still be climbing, but for not much longer. The **Vale of Cashmere** will be to your right. This is an especially pretty and tranquil spot with its lush flowering vegetation and flowing water fountains. It gets its name from an epic poem in 1817 by Sir Thomas Moore. If you wish, follow the path down to an intricate series of formal ponds.

The drive exits at **Grand Army Plaza**. After you get yourself to Grand Army Plaza, look around a bit. This is one of the grandest urban spaces in New



Beautiful sunset at Prospect Park

York. The plaza is an oval. Its centerpiece is an 80-foot arch, designed by John H. Duncan, designer of Grant's Tomb in Manhattan. Completed in 1892, the arch honors the Union forces in the Civil War with sculptures by Frederick McMonnies, who also designed the Horse Tamers. The fountain in the center, Bailey Fountain, recently restored, was completed in 1932. The fountain features allegorical figures often interpreted as Wisdom and Fertility. On Saturdays, this is the site of a lively farmers market, where you can pick up a snack.

If you are entering the park from Grand Army Plaza, turn right onto West Drive. The West Drive starts off nice and easy with the Long Meadow on your left. This segment is almost a mile long. Past the **Tennis House**, you'll see the Pools, which mark the beginning of the park's Ravine, which was restored between 1998 and 2000.

The first building you'll encounter to your left is the **Picnic House**, and then the Tennis House. A little further on to your left you'll see the **Bandshell** at 9th Street. This is the venue for Celebrate Brooklyn, a fabulous series of free performances held each summer. Call 718-768-0855 or go to www.celebratebrooklyn.org.

Rounding the bend past a complex of ballfields, you'll be going downhill to Prospect Lake. Olmsted and Vaux took advantage of the original flat farmland to hollow out this sparkling waterbody.



Fall colors are reflected in the waters of Prospect Lake.

PROSPECT PARK



Eastern Parkway

4

Length:
Estimated travel time:
Attractions:

2.5 miles
Biking—30 minutes; Walking—1.5 hours
Brooklyn Public Library’s Central Library, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn Museum, Weeksville Historical Society, Brooklyn Children’s Museum, Mount Prospect Park, McNair Park, Franklin Avenue Shuttle Community Garden, historic neighborhoods of Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, Wingate

Character: Sheltered historic parkway with cross-traffic at intersections.

Directions at a Glance
Starting at northern corner of Prospect Park, at intersection of Grand Army Plaza and Flatbush Avenue in front of the Brooklyn Public Library

- Mile**
- 0.0 Begin in front of Prospect Park at Grand Army Plaza. Cross Flatbush Avenue to plaza in front of the Brooklyn Public Library’s Central Library.
 - 0.1 Walk across plaza to Eastern Parkway. Cross Eastern Parkway at Underhill, traveling around circle counter-clockwise
 - 0.2 Turn right on service road. Multi-use path begins on median strip between service road and main drive of parkway.
 - 0.6 Cross Eastern Parkway at Washington Avenue. Cross Washington Avenue to pedestrian/bike path through parkway mall.
 - 2.5 End at Buffalo Avenue.



Tropical Paradise: The space-age conservatory at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden provides relief from winter without the high airfares.

EASTERN PARKWAY



Subways

Take the 2 or 3 to Grand Army Plaza. Other subway lines are nearby. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

You can find restaurants and grocery stores along Nostrand, Kingston, and Utica Avenues. The Brooklyn Museum and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden also contain eateries.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms can be found in the Brooklyn Public Library, Mount Prospect Park, Brower Park, and Lincoln Terrace Park.

Area History

Any way you cut it, Eastern Parkway is an only-in-Brooklyn experience. It combines the nineteenth century grandeur of an Olmsted design with dizzying cultural diversity.

Eastern Parkway follows the course of Jamaica Pass, a low area between two terminal moraines. A moraine is an accumulation of boulders, stones, or other debris carried and deposited by a glacier. The Parkway is a natural land route, the site of an historic Native American path. The British took this route in the summer of 1776 on their way to confront rebellious Americans in what is now Prospect Park.

Built between 1870 and 1874, it is the world's first parkway, the testing ground for an idea that Olmsted and Vaux adopted from similar grand boulevards in Paris and Berlin. Eastern Parkway, however, is much longer than these and, instead of cutting through an already dense city, was built through what was then a largely undeveloped countryside. Olmsted and Vaux envisioned a pleasant carriage drive between two tree-lined pedestrian malls. Two service roads formed the outer edges of the route, facilitating delivery to the luxurious residences that Olmsted anticipated would line the route of the parkway.

EASTERN PARKWAY



Brooklyn stoops: These Crown Heights row houses boast a variety of window shapes and the omnipresent New York high steps to the parlor floor.

With the turn of the century boom in Brooklyn’s population, the parkway’s character changed from a pleasant country drive to a major thoroughfare.

Trip Description

The marked bikeway begins at Washington Avenue, just past the Brooklyn Museum. If you’re on a bike, walk it up until that point. Don’t worry—there’s enough to see and do along this stretch that slowing down is well worth it. If you’re in a hurry, however, the best bike route to Washington Avenue is the center island along the north side of Eastern Parkway, which begins just past Underhill Avenue. Avoid biking on the central vehicular lane. Traffic within the roadway of the Parkway is crowded and speedy. Cars will be

zinging past you less than two feet away. The Parkway starts at the central branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. Then it continues through **Crown Heights**, a neighborhood shared by two highly contrasting cultures: African/Caribbean and



This Saturday Greenmarket at Grand Army Plaza attracts shoppers from all over Brooklyn.

EASTERN PARKWAY

Lubavitcher Jewish.

Let's start at Grand Army Plaza. First stop: the Central Library of the **Brooklyn Public Library** (www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org) system, whose modernist façade faces the arch. You really owe it to yourself to step inside and admire the stone carvings over the entry. Once inside, you'll pass through a wide hallway to enter a light-filled atrium that, with the removal of the paper card catalog, now functions as a lively exhibition space. The library has bike racks out front.

As you begin traveling up Eastern Parkway, you will see Mount Prospect Park on the south side, and, on the north side a row of large apartment buildings, at one time among the most prestigious addresses in Brooklyn. Traveling along the southern, park-

side of the route by foot is recommended.

Mount Prospect Park is a pleasant little park that contains the second highest point in Brooklyn. The park features a brand new playground, bathrooms and one of the lushest lawns in New York City.

Right next door you'll find the north entrance to the world-famous **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** (www.bbg.org). Gardens are creatures of the seasons, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden takes advantage of all four of them. This 52-acre facility is jam-packed with amazing features including the Cranford Rose Garden in early summer and the always lovely Japanese garden. Even in the depths of winter you might find a blooming witchhazel outdoors, or you can visit the indoor Conservatory,

Brooklyn Botanic Garden in bloom



EASTERN PARKWAY



Sukkah: Jewish custom requires dining in an open to the sky “desert hut” for eight days in autumn.

which replicates desert, rainforest, and temperate habitats. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden also has bathrooms and a café.

The adjacent **Brooklyn Museum of Art** is housed in a formidable Beaux Arts building. It is the second largest art museum in New York City, which in a city of art museums, says a lot. Its Egyptian collection is top notch and terrifically displayed. The museum also contains bathrooms and a café as well as a beautiful plaza for anyone to rest and enjoy. For current exhibits and events, visit their website at www.brooklynart.org. If you aren't careful, you can spend the entire day here. But you won't want to miss the rest of the parkway.

The bike lane begins at Washington Avenue on the south side of the Parkway. **Dr. Ronald E. McNair Park**

anchors the corner here. This is a very formal and dignified—yet leafy—park, a befitting memorial for the second African American to venture into space. The park is located within Crown Heights where the West Indian Carnival parade takes place each year on Labor Day. Hundreds of thousands line the route to cheer on a colorful procession of floats, steel drum bands and dancers. And the Caribbean food and craft stalls that line the service roads on that day would be a great reason to come even if the parade was not happening.

From here on, the buildings along the Parkway become a mixture of middle-class family row houses and small apartment buildings. You'll soon pass the **Franklin Avenue Shuttle Community Garden**. In its modest way, this garden is an expression of the culture of the local community. A

EASTERN PARKWAY



Weeksville: A nineteenth century free black agricultural colony becomes a venue for the celebration of afro centric cultural life as the stilt-man "spirit" dances to a traditional drum band.

team of expert gardeners concentrate on growing the food that they grew up farming and eating.

The Parkway bends at Bedford Avenue. Just a little past this intersection, stop and look behind you for a pleasant view of stately trees, solid buildings, and active people. New York at her best.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum (www.bchildmus.org) is a wonderful side trip, especially if you're traveling with children. You'll find it at the corner of St. Marks and Brooklyn Avenues, six blocks to the north of the Parkway. The museum complex incorporates bits of recycled architecture, including a trolley kiosk from the Queensboro Bridge and an immense sewer pipe. But the creative exhibitions are the real reason for going.

Just a little bit before Brooklyn Avenue, pedestrian traffic includes more and more bearded men dressed in black suits, sporting fedoras. This is a sign that you're entering the Lubavitcher Hasidic area of Crown Heights. The Lubavitcher community is a branch of Orthodox Judaism with historical roots in eastern Europe. Because they are restricted from riding in automobiles or even elevators on the Sabbath, the Lubavitcher Hasidim live in close-knit neighborhoods where they can walk to temple, a practice that also creates a strong sense of local community. Their world headquarters is at the busy corner of Kingston Avenue.

The Parkway moves along to **Lincoln Terrace Park**. Eastern Parkway's ups and downs are gradual, so you may find surprising the park's initial steep slope—but remember, you are climb-



Lubavitch Headquarters at the corner of Eastern Parkway and Kingston Avenue.

ing a moraine. Many of the trees in the park are magnificent. The highlight is a grand European-style allée lined with large Sycamores. The tennis courts on Buffalo Avenue are popular, a good place to witness some excellent back and forth.

You are now officially in the historic community of **Weeksville**. This area was settled by free blacks in the late 1830s. It was one of the few places in New York in which black people could own property. The Parkway actually destroyed the character of the community by barging through the old streets and imposing a grid upon what had been a rambling village streetscape. The remnants of this community can be seen at 1698-1708 Bergen Street, between Buffalo and Rochester Avenues, where the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville (www.weeksvillesociety.org) is

headquartered.

Eastern Parkway ends two blocks past Rochester Avenue, near the intersection of Ralph Avenue. Eastern Parkway Extension, which does not have sheltered malls, continues on from Ralph Avenue. Turn off Eastern Parkway at Buffalo Avenue to start the next segment of the Greenway.

EASTERN PARKWAY



Highland Park/ Ridgewood Reservoir

5

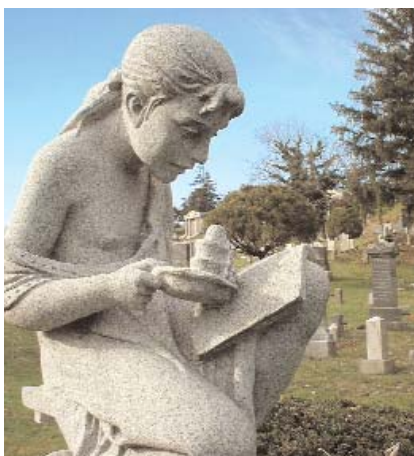
Length: 6.6 miles
Estimated travel time: Biking—1 hour; Walking—3 hours
Attractions: Highland Park, Ridgewood Reservoir, several historic cemeteries, neighborhoods of Brownsville, Ocean Hill, and Highland Park

Character: This leg starts out on fairly busy streets and includes a hefty climb. Lush Highland Park and a skirt around the edge of Ridgewood Reservoir are ample rewards to the perseverant.

Directions at a Glance

Start at Eastern Parkway and Buffalo Avenue, at the northeast corner of Lincoln Terrace Park

The garden cemetery movement of the nineteenth century led to the development of sculpture parks on the hills of Brooklyn and Queens.



- Mile**
- 0.0 Travel south on Buffalo Avenue along eastern edge of park.
 - 0.2 Turn left on East New York Avenue.
 - 0.6 Continue forward on Pitkin Avenue.
 - 0.7 Turn left on Legion Street, then right at East New York Avenue.
 - 1.3 Right on Mother Gaston Boulevard.
 - 1.4 Left on Liberty Avenue.
 - 2.2 Left on Vermont Street.
 - 2.8 Right on Sunnyside Avenue.
 - 2.9 Left on Miller Street (very steep).
 - 3.0 Right on Highland Boulevard.
 - 3.1 Left on Heath Place into Highland Park. Follow Greenway signs through park.
 - 3.7 Cross Vermont Avenue to stairs leading up to trail around Ridgewood Reservoir. Turn right at trail.
 - 4.3 Right at ramp to Cypress Avenue. Turn right on Cypress Avenue.
 - 4.4 Left at Cypress Hills Street (careful— heavy traffic and no traffic lights for pedestrians and bicyclists).
 - 5.2 Turn right on Cooper Avenue.
 - 6.0 Ease forward to 78th Avenue.
 - 6.3 Turn right on 79th Street.
 - 6.5 Turn left on Myrtle Avenue.
 - 6.6 End at Myrtle Avenue opposite 79th Street.

HIGHLAND PARK AND RIDGEWOOD RESERVOIR



HIGHLAND PARK AND RIDGEWOOD RESERVOIR



The Brooklyn-Queens Greenway trail adjacent to Ridgewood Reservoir

Subways

Take the 3 train to Sutter Avenue-Rutland Road or the 3 or 4 to Crown Heights-Utica Avenue. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234.)

Where to Eat

You'll find restaurants and grocery stores on Fulton Street and along Myrtle Avenue.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms can be found in Highland Park.

Area History

This stretch is the longest so far of unshielded, on-street walking and biking. It also has the most sustained climbing, as you travel over the crest of the terminal moraine. Highland Park is the reward. Straddling Brooklyn and Queens, Highland Park is situated on a high plateau that commands dramatic views of nearby cemeteries, East New York, Woodhaven, the Rockaways, and the Atlantic Ocean. The history of Highland Park cannot be separated from the history of Ridgewood Reservoir, which operated from the 1860s until 1989.

Most New Yorkers are aware of the

HIGHLAND PARK AND RIDGEWOOD RESERVOIR



Cypress Hills National Cemetery—Walkers pass an orderly Civil War grave field where Union and Confederate soldiers are buried side by side.

extensive system of reservoirs in the Catskill Mountains that supply modern New York City. Less known is the fact that in the mid-1800s, the City of Brooklyn received its drinking water from an extensive system of reservoirs, lakes, conduits, and pumping stations in Long Island that eventually stretched as far as Massapequa. Ridgewood functioned as the main reservoir for Brooklyn, working in tandem with the smaller Mount Prospect Reservoir, which was located in what is now Mount Prospect Park, near the beginning of the Eastern Parkway leg of the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway. Ridgewood Reservoir has not been used since 1989; the last of its three sections was drained in that year.

Trees, shrubs, and other plants have taken root in the three basins, creating a thriving young forest on the site of the former reservoir. The reservoir property was recently transferred to

the Department of Parks & Recreation for development as public parkland.

In 1891, the City of Brooklyn purchased the land surrounding the reservoir for park purposes under the jurisdiction of the Highland Park Society. The park might have been named Ridgewood Park. However, a private park operated at the time by that name in Brooklyn, and the Parks Department feared that people would get confused. Then in 1905, Parks extended the property to the south by purchasing the Schenck estate, which included a Dutch-style farmhouse that was removed in 1940. Highland Park took its present shape in 1906-08, when Parks acquired a third parcel to the west from the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity.

Trip Description

The beginning of this leg of the Greenway takes the traveler through

HIGHLAND PARK AND RIDGEWOOD RESERVOIR

the vibrant neighborhoods of Brownsville and East New York, before climbing the moraine into Highland Park. Traffic in spots can be heavy. Bicyclists new to city streets are encouraged to dismount and walk their bikes on the sidewalks if they're feeling overwhelmed. The point of the Greenway is to slow down and have fun, taking in the life of a perhaps unfamiliar neighborhood, not to get from point A to point B in the quickest time.

Travelling down the edge of Lincoln Terrace Park, enjoy the line of stately sycamores along the park's edge. Turn left on East New York Avenue, and follow it to where it merges with Pitkin Avenue. Continue on Pitkin and travel one block to Legion Street, which forms the long end of a pleasant triangle park. Notice the fine old

movie palace that stands at Legion and Pitkin, which is no longer in use as a cinema.

Turn left on Legion Street, and then go a short block to pick up East New York Avenue again, where you will turn right. Continue on East New York Avenue to Mother Gaston Boulevard, where you'll turn right. Turn left on Liberty Avenue, which travels through an industrial area. Turn left on Vermont Street, which will bring you back into a residential area. Vermont Streets starts to climb to Sunnyside Avenue, where you'll turn right. Turn left on Miller Street, where you'll really be asked to climb. Most bicyclists may find it easier and safer to just walk up this block to Highland Boulevard. Turn right, and be on the lookout on your left for Heath Place, which will lead you into **Highland**



Highland Park

HIGHLAND PARK AND RIDGEWOOD RESERVOIR

Park, where the Greenway again becomes green.

The Greenway through the park is exceptionally well marked. Highland Park is a beautiful expanse of tree-filled green, well-used by the community. It is short on architectural pretensions, and long on trees, grass, and recreational amenities such as baseball fields and basketball courts. It even has a community garden for children, tucked in the park's southwest corner along Jamaica Avenue.

The Greenway winds pleasantly through the park until it reaches busy Vermont Avenue. Cross Vermont Avenue (take your time!) and walk up the steps to the trail around **Ridgewood Reservoir**. By the way, you have left Brooklyn and are now in Queens.

Turn right on the trail around the reservoir, and get ready for some

spectacular views over the Brooklyn flatlands. After a bit over half a mile, you'll spot Cypress Hill Avenue and the ramp that will take you down to it.

The trail around Ridgewood Reservoir can feel somewhat isolated. Although the trail makes a complete loop around the reservoir, turn left to remain closer to street traffic. At the far corner of the reservoir you'll pass some abandoned buildings and then, in quick succession, a stairway and then a ramp to Cypress Hills Street—take one, you pick.

Turn right on Cypress Hills Avenue, and then left when you come to Cypress Hills Street. Frankly, this is one of the most confusing turns on the Greenway—there is no elegant way to do it. You may want to backtrack up Cypress Hills Street to the pedestrian lights if traffic is too heavy. But even these crossings aren't complete.



Ridgewood Reservoir

HIGHLAND PARK AND RIDGEWOOD RESERVOIR



Attached houses line a hillside as the Greenway heads to Highland Park.

Ultimately, you want to be heading downhill, towards the blue-green copper dome of what is the Hungarian Benevolent Society Building. Once you're on your way though, the downhill run is a fitting reward for whatever frustration you may have experienced coming uphill. On your left you will pass the Beth El Cemetery, where Harry Houdini is buried.

Turn right on Cooper Avenue. Just before Cooper Avenue jogs left you'll

be nicking a corner of **Cypress Hills Cemetery** (718-277-2900), where Jackie Robinson and Mae West are buried. At the intersection of 78th Avenue, Cooper Avenue turns abruptly left, towards the north. ***Do not follow Cooper Avenue.*** Continue straight ahead along 78th Avenue. Follow 78th Avenue to 79th Street and turn right. Go a couple of short blocks to 79th Lane, opposite the end of which you'll see the entrance to Forest Park, which is the next leg of our journey.



Forest Park

6

Length: 3.5 miles

Estimated travel time: Biking—45 minutes; walking—2 hours

Attractions: Forest Park, which includes Seuffert Bandshell, Strack Pond, hiking trails, the Pine Grove, and Forest Park Carousel, Forest Hills Gardens (side trip)

Character: Protected park trails and low-traffic park roads. Forest Park Drive is auto-free between Woodhaven Boulevard and Metropolitan Avenue.

Directions at a Glance

Starting at Myrtle Avenue entrance to the park, across from 79th Lane

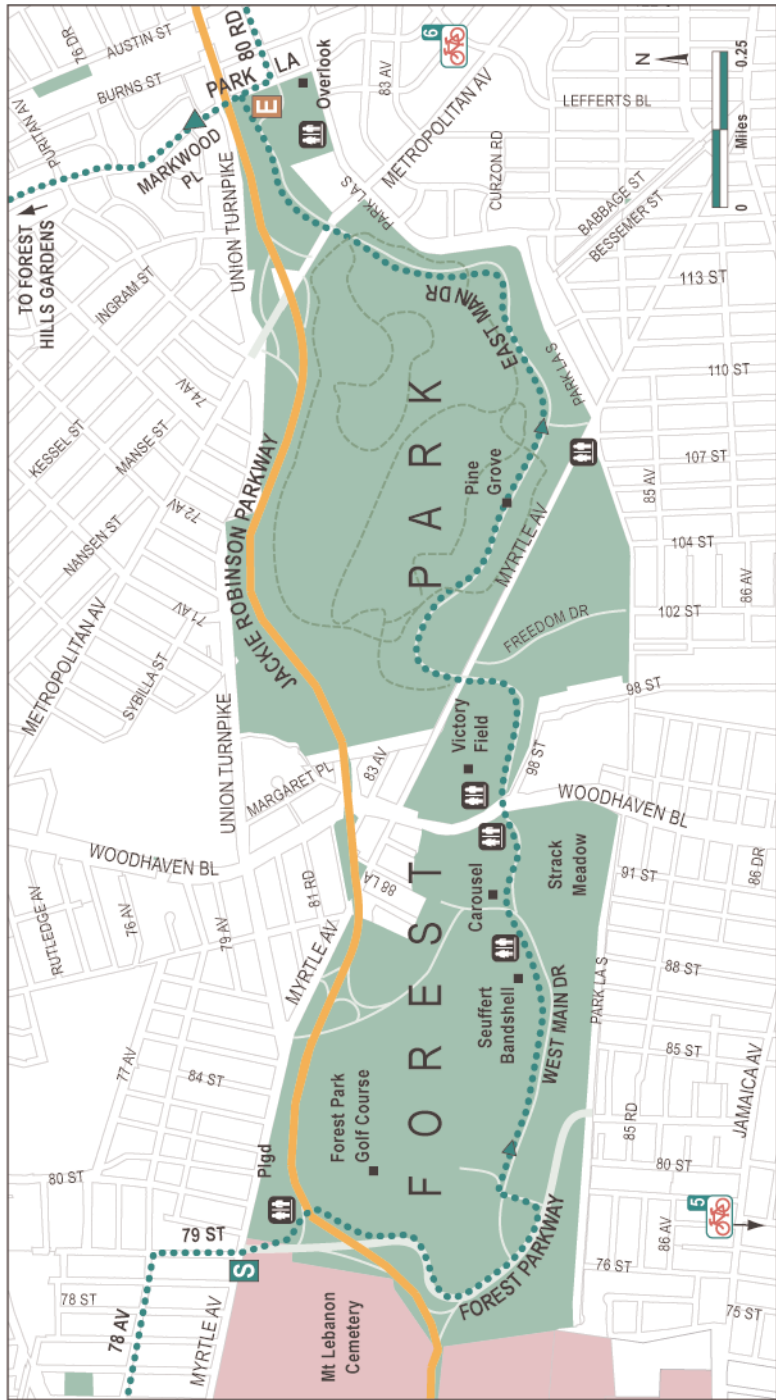
Mile

- 0.0 Follow marked trail around basketball court, bocce court and playground, then through a tunnel. The trail skirts the edge of the Forest Park Golf Course.
- 0.6 Trail runs into roadway to Jackie Robinson Parkway. Do not try to cross this road—it is a blind curve and cars are going very fast and not looking for pedestrians. Instead, turn left on walkway and continue on to intersection of Forest Park Drive.
- 0.7 Turn left, following signs for Seuffert Bandshell and Forest Park Golf Course.
- 1.6 Cross Woodhaven Boulevard.
- 2.0 Cross Myrtle Avenue.
- 3.2 Cross Metropolitan Avenue.
- 3.5 End at Forest Park Drive and Park Lane.



A tranquil Forest Park walk

FOREST PARK



FOREST PARK

Subways

The J and Z (Z line rush hours only, no weekends) lines roughly parallel Forest Park through the Queens neighborhood of Woodhaven. The Woodhaven Boulevard stop offers an uncomplicated route to Forest Park and our starting point. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

There are a number of eateries on Metropolitan Avenue.

Public Restrooms

There are restrooms in Forest Park at the Myrtle Avenue entrance, the visitor center on Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive, Victory Field on Woodhaven Boulevard and near the Overlook.

Area History

Forest Park is one of the most pristine parks in New York City. Forest Park Drive was designed by the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted in the 1890's. Of the park's 543 acres, 411 are woodland. The rest of the park includes a golf course, ballfields, tennis courts, a bandshell, and even a carousel. This is a park that you could spend the day exploring.

The history of this park is an interesting example of inter-borough

jostling. It was originally purchased by Brooklyn, parcel by parcel, between the years 1895 and 1898, in the days when it was a forward-thinking metropolis and Queens was still a loose amalgam of farming villages. The land, part of the terminal moraine ridge line, is sloping. Not useful for farming, it was seen as a recreational resource for outdoors-starved Brooklynites. After the incorporation of Queens into greater New York City in 1898, the land was designated and preserved as part of the Queens park system.

While you're here, take a good look at the park's topography and vegetation. It preserves distinctive glacial features: kettle hole ponds, knobby hilltops (kettles and knobs), and "erratic" boulders. The forest is still largely native red oak and black oak. Many of the trees are over 150 years old.

The neighborhoods surrounding the park—Woodhaven, Richmond Hill, Kew Gardens, and Forest Hills—make wonderful sidetrips. The grand Victorian houses of north Richmond Hill are especially worth seeking out.

Trip Description

The Greenway through Forest Park is well-marked. You'll follow the bike route as it curves around the buildings and playing fields, through a tunnel, and then out near the Forest Park Golf Course. The forest is well managed; you'll



Shingle roofed pre-war homes along a tree lined boulevard at the edge of Forest Park

experience a refreshing variety of indigenous plants, including viburnums, ferns, and even—in season—ephemeral forest floor wildflowers.

You enter the park near a bocce court, which is just past the basketball court. Bocce is an Italian game that resembles a kind of leisurely lawn bowling mixed with shuffleboard. If a game is in progress, you owe it to yourself to stop and watch a European tradition still being passed on through a cohesive Italian community. You'll find a restroom in the park building next to the bocce courts.

After a leisurely tour around the golf course, you'll bump up against some concrete barriers. The curving road on the other side leads up to the Jackie Robinson Parkway. The automobiles are traveling fast and

can't see you until it's too late to stop. Do not try to cross this road. Instead, turn left on the walkway and follow it a short distance until the roadway forks with Forest Park Drive. Take the left fork, following the signs indicating Forest Park Golf Course and Seuffert Bandshell. Traffic is light through here, and there is a designated bike lane. So take it slow and enjoy the forest. You'll soon spot **Seuffert Bandshell** near Woodhaven Boulevard. Seuffert is a true Queens institution. The facilities have gone through several incarnations, the most recent upgrade being completed in 2000. During the warmer months, it's a venue for a wide variety of music.

The **Forest Park Carousel** presides just up the hill from the bandshell. The carousel's fancifully and intricately carved animals, created in 1903, are the work of Daniel

Muller, who created twelve carousels in his lifetime. This is one of the only two that have survived.

At some point you might want to dismount and follow one of the side paths (no bike riding allowed) for an even more intimate experience of the forest. Forest Park is known as a hiker's park for good reason. Just before you cross Woodhaven Boulevard, you may want to stop and experience the PFC Laurence **Strack Pond** on foot. Strack Pond is a beautiful kettle pond teeming with life including plants, salamanders, frogs and other wetland species. This pond provides nature lovers with a great spot to see butterflies, red-tailed hawks, and great blue herons. Visitors can enjoy the pond's trail and viewing area while listening to the calls of the Tufted Titmouse, the Baltimore Oriole, and the Kingbird.

After you cross Woodhaven, the hiking opportunities multiply. East Main Drive, closed to traffic, is a special stretch of the Greenway. Keep your eye out for the **Pine Grove**. This is an expanse of evergreen pine trees which was planted in 1914 after a tree blight devastated thousands of chestnut trees. The ground is soft and fragrant from all the fallen pine needles. The canopy is evergreen and softly rustling. In 1923, an additional 70 pine trees were planted on either side of the drive, one for each Richmond Hill or Woodhaven casualty of World War I.



Strack Pond is home to a three-acre freshwater wetland habitat. It's a great spot for bird and nature lovers to enjoy the kettle pond's tranquility.

For more extensive hiking through this 165-acre oak forest, take one of the three marked trails that all begin along the East Main Drive. The Blue Trail starts next to the LIRR overpass and is a 1.7-mile loop. The 2.4-mile Orange Trail can be picked up opposite the Pine Grove and takes you along the forest's perimeter. The Yellow Trail, designated a Millennium Trail in 2000, is located near Metropolitan Avenue, and is one mile. Both the Blue and Yellow Trails have interpretive signs and maps.

Shortly after crossing Metropolitan Avenue you'll spot the Overlook. This is the Queens Park Headquarters. While the view here is now blocked by trees and buildings, it's still a good spot to stop and loll on the grass to collect your energy before heading off into a more trafficked part of the Greenway.

Side Trip: Forest Hills Gardens

This sidetrip takes you through Forest Hills Gardens, a landmark in urban planning.

Forest Hills Gardens is a 175-acre planned community designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (landscape architect) and Grosvenor Atterbury (architect). Inspired by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement, the development was supposed to have been a model for middle-income communities, providing a taste of pre-industrial building and countryside for people toiling away in the city. Halfway through the development, however, a residents' organization took over and installed a series of restrictive covenants, turning the development into an upper-income community. Ironically, these same restrictive covenants may have preserved the character of the area. Today, this is a neighborhood of magnificent Tudor-style homes, lush greenery and stately trees.

To get there, take this route:

On leaving Forest Park, turn left on



Forest Hills Gardens was designed as an idealized tudor village with green spaces.

Park Lane. Cross the highway on Markwood Place into Forest Hills Gardens. Note: At this point, please walk your bike. This is a one-way route into a private residential community. The streets here are not public. If you want to preserve access for the future, please be on your best behavior.

Follow Markwood Place to Greenway North, which is the road that circles Forest Hill Gardens. Greenway North turns into Greenway South at Greenway Terrace. Stop and take it all in. Greenway Terrace is a brick-paved evocation of a European town square. The Long Island Railroad station is a particularly fine example of Tudor-style building.

Cross the square and exit under the LIRR tracks, turning right onto Continental Avenue.

Cross Queens Boulevard. Here Continental Avenue ends, and you are at the corner of 70th Road. Continue down 70th Road to 112th Street. Turn right on Jewel Avenue. Jewel Avenue is one of the more challenging blocks of the Greenway, with heavy traffic and a highway entrance speeding cars up even more. Ride carefully here.

Jewel Avenue turns into 69th Road. After it crosses the Grand Central Parkway (where you have a good view of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park), cross 69th Road at the traffic light on the corner, then backtrack slightly on foot to the marked paved path into Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

FOREST PARK



Flushing Meadows-Corona Park

7

Length: 5.2 miles
Estimated travel time: Biking—1 hour; walking—3 hours
Attractions: Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Unisphere, New York State Pavilion, Ederle Terrace, Queens Zoo, Queens Museum of Art, Hall of Science, neighborhoods of Kew Gardens, Forest Hills, and Briarwood
 Historic Flushing (side trip)

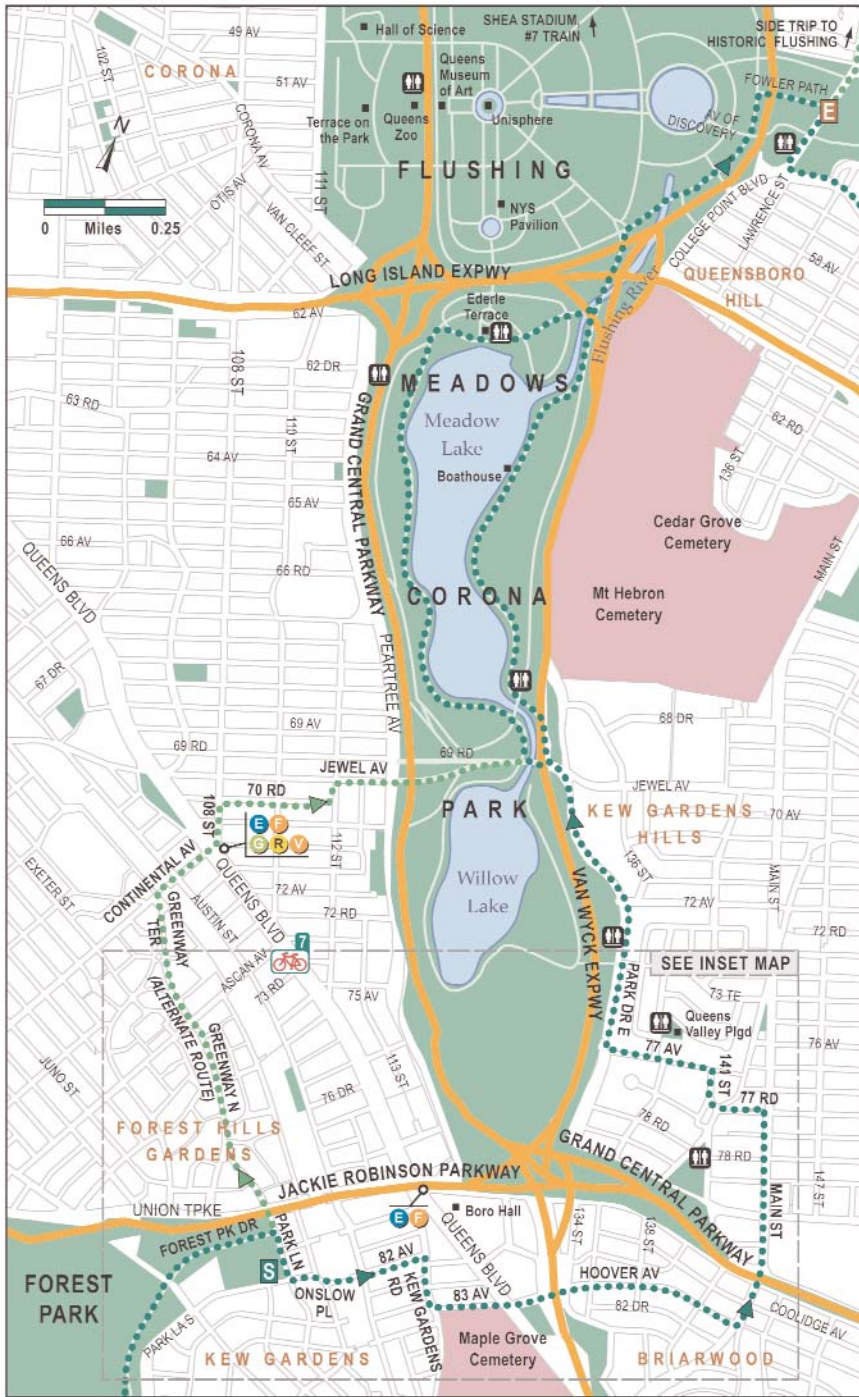
Character: A combination of on-street traveling and sheltered park route.

Directions at a Glance

Start at Park Lane and Forest Park Drive

Mile	<i>See also inset map.</i>	Mile	
0.0	Turn right onto Park Lane.	3.0	Cross left on Jewel Avenue as it crosses Flushing Meadows Corona Park.
0.1	Left on Onslow Place, then short right on Grenfell Street, then immediately turn left onto 82nd Avenue.	3.2	Turn right onto trail alongside Meadow Lake. Follow trail around southern edge of lake (right side).
0.5	Right on Kew Gardens Road.	4.2	Exit trail before it curves to the left around north end of Meadow Lake.
0.6	Left onto 83rd Avenue.	4.3	Cross parking lot heading towards small, slightly arched bridge that crosses tiny Flushing River. Follow on marked trail that roughly follows the river.
0.8	At 134th Street, travel straight ahead on Hoover Avenue. Pass Maple Grove Cemetery on your right.	5.1	After crossing under the Long Island Expressway, turn right at Meridian Road. Follow Meridian Road to Fowler Path. Turn right onto Fowler Path, past Lawrence Playground to the Park exit on College Point Boulevard.
1.3	Left on Main Street.		
1.8	Left on 77th Road.		
2.0	Right on 141st Street.		
2.1	Left on 77th Avenue.		
2.3	Right on Park Drive East.		

FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK



FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

Subways

The E, F, G and R get you close to the southern and middle part of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. Take the E or F train to Union Turnpike/Kew Gardens and travel south to pick up the route at Kew Gardens Road and 83rd Avenue.



Greenway alongside Meadow Lake

The 7 train runs along the northern end of the Park, with stops at 111th Street, Shea Stadium, and in downtown Flushing. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

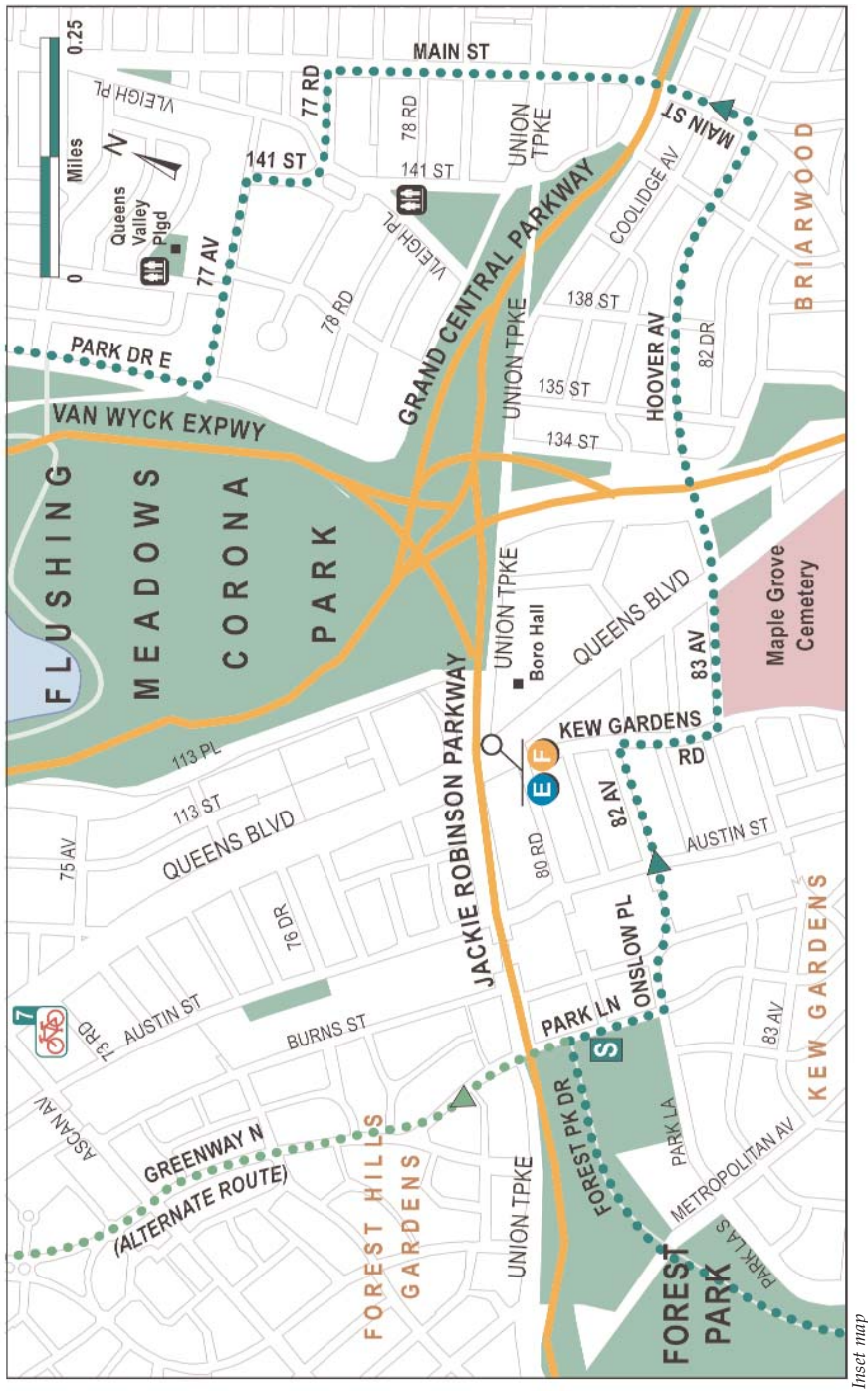
Ederle Terrace is home to a New York City institution, Knish Nosh, or save your appetite for the many ethnic stores and restaurants in Flushing, which is 10 minutes away from the end of the route. You can also find restaurants and food stores along Queens Boulevard and Austin Street.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms can be found in Flushing Meadows Corona Park near Ederle Terrace, the Paserelle Plaza, the Queens Zoo and several other locations.

Area History

This segment of the Greenway explores Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, one of the great examples of urban land reclamation. The area started out as a vast salt marsh. A salt marsh is a low coastal grassland that is covered periodically by the rising tide. Salt marshes are found on the edges of estuaries, places where a river flows into the ocean. The predominant plant species is *Spartina*, a tough grass that excretes salt, and thus is adapted to the edge between the land and the sea. While eaten by very few creatures, *Spartina* shelters a rich array of life. Before urbanization, Flushing and the other salt marshes that rimmed the estuary served New York City well. Salt hay was harvested for the market gardens, where it was used as a winter mulch.



FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

But by the end of the nineteenth century, the biological richness of Flushing Meadows was eschewed for the convenience of having a nearby dump. By the 1920s, trainloads of garbage arrived daily from Brooklyn, including carloads of still smoldering furnace ashes. The surreal, smoking landscaped earned the area the name “the Valley of the Ashes” in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, *The Great Gatsby*.

In an early case of environmental restoration, the land was painstakingly reclaimed. In the 1930s, Robert Moses, who was the Parks Commissioner at the time, directed the relocation of over 50 million cubic tons of garbage. The dump was transformed into a showpiece site for both the 1939 and 1964 World’s Fairs. Today, the park is the cultural and sporting heart of Queens.

This park is used every day by people from the entire region. People come to play, stroll along the Flushing Bay

promenade, to enjoy the sounds of a summer concert, to visit one of the park’s outstanding cultural institutions, or simply to relax in a beautiful garden. The many recreational playing fields and playgrounds in the park are used for activities that reflect the vast ethnic mix of Queens; soccer and cricket are especially popular.

Presiding at the center of the fair site, the **Unisphere** is awe-inspiring. This twelve-story iconic monument of the globe represents Queens like nothing else. Even though you’ve probably seen hundreds of images of this work, nothing prepares you for the sheer enormity of it. The Unisphere was built in 1963 out of 350 tons of steel for the 1964 fair. Not surprisingly, the U.S. Steel Corporation was the Unisphere’s sponsor.

The park houses four other leading cultural and educational institutions. The active **Queens Museum of Art** (www.queensmuseum.org) is housed

The Unisphere stands behind a walking tour in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.



FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK



The Science Playground at the New York Hall of Science

in the former New York City Building, built for the 1939 World's Fair. The museum features both forward-looking art and a fascinating panoramic model of New York City, showing all of our rivers, parks and bridges and more than 800,000 teeny-tiny buildings. The **Queens Theatre in the Park** (www.queens theatre.org), dedicated to the performing arts, is due south of the museum. You'll find the **Queens Zoo** and the **New York Hall of Science** on 111th street, on the other side of the Grand Central Parkway.

The Queens Zoo (www.queens zoo.com) is managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society and devoted to the critters and habitats of North America. Architecture and 60's buffs take note of the geodesic dome, now used as an aviary, which was designed by Buckminster Fuller. The New York Hall of Science (www.nyhallsci.org) is New York

City's only museum dedicated to hands-on, interactive science and technology exhibitions and education. The permanent exhibitions include the *The Search for Life Beyond Earth* and *The Sports Challenge*.

The northern end of the park is a center of world-class sports facilities, including both the **USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center**, home to the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament, and **Shea Stadium** (soon to be redeveloped as Citi Field stadium), home to the New York Mets, as well as the new state-of-the-art pool and ice rink, which is scheduled to open in 2007 as the largest recreational facility in a City park. Shea Stadium has gone down in rock and roll legend as the venue for the Beatles concert in August 1965 that was the first stadium rock show in history.

FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

Trip Description

You have a short but complex hop to the beginning of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (see inset map, page 45). The route takes you past the Queens County Courthouse and through some lovely, leafy areas, including the pleasant, middle-class neighborhoods of **Kew Gardens** and **Kew Garden Hills**. The stretch of 83rd Avenue to Hoover Avenue borders **Maple Grove Cemetery**. Maple Grove was established in 1875. It is still in use and is well tended. While you're on 83rd Avenue, as you cross Queens Boulevard you see Queens Borough Hall and the Queens Court Building, two pleasant modernist buildings.

Once you're in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, you'll be making your way northwards towards the site of both the 1939 and 1964 World's fairs. It may be preferable to stay on the path bordering the lake, but beware, it can get muddy after heavy rain. This is a great park for both bird and people watching. The lake is a popular spot for all kinds of aquatic fowl, especially during the spring and autumn migration seasons. The terrain here is large grassy fields around substantial Meadow Lake.

The action picks up at the end of Meadow Lake. Follow the Greenway signs that direct you underneath the Long Island Expressway into the World's Fair site. Spend some time exploring this fascinating corner of the city, taking in the Unisphere, a varied assortment of statues and pocket

gardens, and perhaps the Queens Museum of Art, the Queens Zoo, or the Hall of Science.

After you've had your fill of exploring, get back on the Greenway by finding the road that parallels the Flushing River along Meridian Road (the Park service road). Watch for a Park sign for Fowler Path. Turn right onto Fowler Path, past Lawrence Playground, which will take you out of the Park to College Point Boulevard.

Side Trip - Historic Flushing

Directions at a Glance:

- | Mile | |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0.0 | Starting at College Point Boulevard outside Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. Turn left onto College Point Boulevard. |
| 0.2 | Turn right on 41st Road. |
| 0.4 | Turn left on Main Street. |
| 0.5 | Turn right on 41st Avenue. |
| 0.8 | Turn left on Bowne Street. |
| 0.9 | Just past Bowne House at 37 th Street, turn right into Margaret Carman Green. Continue through Margaret Carman Green onto 37th Street (to see Kingsland Homestead and Weeping Beech Park). |
| 1.0 | Backtrack through Margaret Carman Green and turn right onto Bowne Street. |
| 1.1 | Turn left on Northern Boulevard. |
| 1.2 | Turn right on Leavitt Street to 137th Street. |
| 1.3 | Backtrack on Leavitt one short block and right onto 35th Place. |
| 1.4 | Left on Linden Place. |
| 1.5 | Cross Northern Boulevard and go right past Main Street. |
| 1.7 | Turn left on Prince Street. |
| 1.9 | Turn left on 38th Avenue. |
| 2.0 | Turn right on Main Street. |
| 2.2 | End at Roosevelt Avenue and Main Street, at subway stop for #7 line. |

FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

This side trip takes you into the old town of Flushing, providing a glimpse both into its long and important history and its rich cultural present.

The route traces some of this history. Once you're there, you'll find a compelling array of other historical buildings, houses of worship, stores and restaurants, and bustling sidestreets.

A new historical trail system with signs highlighting historically significant sights within downtown Flushing, including the **Bowne House**, **The Lewis H. Latimer House**, **Kingsland Homestead**, **The Weeping Beech Tree**, and **Margaret Carman Green** was completed in 2007.

Flushing held a reputation for religious freedom almost from its founding. In 1657 Governor Petrus Stuyvesant declared the Dutch Reformed Church the official religion of the colony. A group of seventeenth century Quakers, the common name for members of the Religious Society of Friends, replied to Stuyvesant with a document entitled the *Flushing Remonstrance*, which is considered the first declaration of religious freedom in American history. Stuyvesant jailed the leading signers, and in 1662 exiled John Bowne, whose house was used for Quaker meetings. The Dutch West India company allowed Bowne to return, carrying orders to Stuyvesant to cease his persecution, thus codifying a certain level of religious freedom, at least in New York. The Quakers became an important

commercial and political force. Francis Lewis, a Quaker and Flushing landowner, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Trip Description

Starting at College Point Boulevard outside of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, travel north to 41st Road, making a right turn to Main Street. Foot and vehicular traffic are quite heavy in the area; cyclists may want to walk bikes and enjoy the hustle, bustle, and history.

Turn right onto 41st Avenue and left onto Bowne Street. The **John Bowne House** is at 37-01 Bowne Street. The kitchen wing, built in 1661, was the controversial meeting spot. This is also the oldest surviving structure in Queens. The Bowne House is owned and operated by the Bowne House Historical Society (www.bowne-house.org) and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City (www.historichousetrust.org).

Just past Bowne House, turn right into **Margaret Carman Green**. Situated in Weeping Beech Park, this plot was named after Margaret I. Carman, a Flushing native who devoted many years to preserving Flushing's history. Her efforts resulted in the opening of the Flushing Freedom Trail; the 1.3-mile trail stops along historical sites, many of which are associated with the underground railroad that lead southern slaves to freedom. After her death in 1976 this tree-lined square of Weeping Beech Park was named in



Fountain of the Fairs



Historic Flushing

FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

her memory. The green is landscaped with willow oaks.

Continuing through the Green to 37th Avenue, **Kingsland Homestead** is on the left. This Dutch-style house was built by Charles Doughty, a Quaker farmer, in 1774. It reflects the relatively greater prosperity of the colony after a century of development. Kingsland Homestead is owned and operated by the Queens Historical Society (www.queenshistoricalsociety.org) and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City.

Just past Kingsland Homestead is the site of the **Weeping Beech Tree**, one of two living NYC landmarks until its death in 1998. The Weeping Beech Tree was planted in 1847 by Samuel Bowne Parsons, owner of one of Flushing's large plant nurseries. The shoot was acquired in Belgium. All weeping beech trees in the United States are descended from this one. Though it died and was cut down in 1998, its daughters are still found fronting its remains here in Weeping Beech Park.

Backtracking through Margaret Carman Green, turn right onto Bowne Street where you will find **George Fox Stone** just before Northern Boulevard. This boulder was named after George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, who came to North America in 1672 and preached here under a stand of oak trees.

Turn left on Northern Boulevard. Turn right onto Leavitt Street to visit the **Lewis H. Latimer House**, which is at

the corner of Leavitt and 137th Street. Born the son of runaway slaves from Virginia, Latimer educated himself in the craft of drafting. Besides being the chief draftsman on Thomas Edison's team, he was a brilliant inventor himself, coming up with the carbon filament for the electrical light bulb. He also drew up the original drawings for Alexander Graham Bell's telephone. This was his house, but not at its original location—it used to be on Holly Avenue in Flushing. The house is owned by the City of New York, operated by the Lewis H. Latimer Fund and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City.

Backtracking on Leavitt Street one short block to 35th Avenue, turn right to Linden Place and left to Northern Boulevard. On the corner is **Flushing Town Hall** (www.flushingtownhall.org), erected in 1864, the Romanesque Revival style building is run by the non-profit Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts. It is home to exhibits, special events, opera, jazz and theater. It has long been a center of community life; entry to the building is free during normal business hours.

Cross Northern Boulevard to the **Friends Meeting House**. Liberated from having to meet in secret in their homes, the Quakers were finally able to build a place for open congregation. A portion of this austere structure was built in 1694, making it the oldest building in continuous use for religious purposes in New York City.



Flushing Town Hall reminds passersby that the plaza has a deep history.

FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

Continuing along Northern Boulevard to Main Street is **Daniel Carter Beard Square**. An 1841 map of the town of Flushing shows the site of Daniel Carter Beard Memorial Square (known as Flushing Park until 1942) as a public park, which makes the square one of the oldest parks in Queens. Daniel Carter Beard was a resident of Flushing, a civil engineer and an internationally known artist. He illustrated Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Beard is probably best remembered in Flushing as a founder and

first national Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America. The square was dedicated in his honor in 1942. After the Square, turn left onto Prince Street, the site of **William Prince Nurseries**, established in Flushing in 1737, one of the first commercial nurseries in America.

Turn left on 38th Avenue, passing the grand old St. George's Episcopal Church just before you reach Main Street. Turn right to find the 7 train subway stop at Roosevelt Avenue.



A collage of color and texture is created by the retail signage in Flushing's tightly packed business district.

FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK



Kissena-Cunningham Corridor

8

Length: 5 miles
Estimated Travel time: Biking—45 minutes; walking—2 hours
Attractions: Kissena Corridor Park, Queens Botanical Garden, Kissena Park, Kissena Park Historic Grove, Kissena Park Velodrome

Character: Mixed residential streets and sheltered park trails.

Directions at a Glance

Starting at College Point Boulevard and Fowler Path (next to Lawrence Playground)

- Mile**
- 0.0 Turn right on College Point Boulevard. and left on Booth Memorial Avenue using the crosswalks for safety at this busy intersection.
 - 0.4 Turn left on 137th Street.
 - 0.5 Turn right on 56th Avenue. Cross Main Street and continue to end.
 - 0.7 Right on 142nd Street.
 - 0.9 Turn left on 56th Road.
 - 1.3 Turn left at 150th Street. Trail enters Kissena Corridor near end of 150th Street.
 - 1.2 Follow trail around ball courts to Peck Avenue and 151st Street.
 - 1.4 Continue forward on Peck Avenue.
 - 1.6 Just before Kissena Boulevard, trail veers left kitty-corner from the 153rd Street sign. Cross Kissena Boulevard to corner of Rose Avenue and Kissena Boulevard. Follow marked trail into Kissena Park.
 - 2.3 Cross 164th Street to Underhill Avenue. Continue forward on Underhill Avenue.

- Mile**
- 2.7 Trail veers right and leaves street at 170th Street, skirting edge of Kissena Park Golf Course.
 - 2.8 Cross Fresh Meadow Lane.
 - 2.9 At Utopia Parkway, dismount. On sidewalk, turn left, walk about 50 yards to Underhill, then turn right to cross Utopia. Remount, then continue forward on Underhill.
 - 3.2 Cross 188th Street.
 - 3.6 Cross 58th Avenue.
 - 3.7 At 196th Street, trail veers right to bridge over Long Island Expressway. At end of bridge, trail enters Cunningham Park, passing through Saint Francis Preparatory School and Public School 179 facilities.
 - 4.0 Just before Francis Lewis Boulevard, trail hooks right back towards 199th Street.
 - 4.2 Trail enters wooded corridor following 199th Street.
 - 4.5 Bridge over 73rd Avenue.
 - 4.8 Bridge over Francis Lewis Boulevard
 - 5.0 Trail ends at ballfields.

KISSENA-CUNNINGHAM CORRIDOR

Subways

Subway coverage is sparse in this area of Queens. The Flushing-Main Street stop on the 7 line is near the beginning of this segment. For your return trip, you can either back-track, or continue on to the next leg of the greenway to Alley Pond Park, and return via the Long Island Railroad. Be forewarned: You will need a permit to bring your bike on the LIRR. The MTA's website has permit applications that you can mail in, or you can acquire a permit at Grand Central or Penn Stations. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

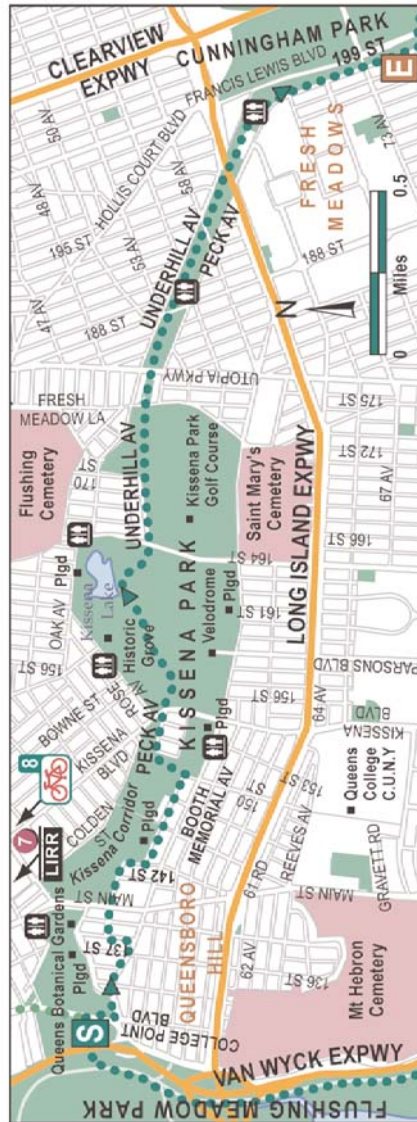
There are restaurants along the Long Island Expressway service road near 188th Street in Fresh Meadows and Francis Lewis Boulevard.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms can be found in the Queens Botanical Garden and Kissena Park (in the Kissena Boathouse near Oak Avenue and West 164th Street and at the tennis courts near Rose Avenue and Bowne Street).

Area History

This segment of the greenway explores the historic township of Flushing, providing a broad perspective of the history of Queens. It includes some of the oldest and most significant historic buildings in New



York City, evidence of the agricultural history of Queens, and vivid encounters with the diverse immigrant communities that make up Queens.

Towards the end of the Flushing Meadows segment, the greenway

KISSENA-CUNNINGHAM CORRIDOR

roughly follows the channelized remnant of the Flushing River. By seventeenth century standards, the Flushing River was navigable, making the colonial town of Flushing a minor port serving the farmsteads of the surrounding region. The town was founded in 1642 by a colony from the Dutch city of Vlissingen—in Dutch, ‘v’ is pronounced similarly to ‘f’ in English. The town was officially chartered in 1645.

Almost from the beginning, specialty farming was an important part of the economy of Flushing. Possibly the first commercial nursery in the United States was established in 1735 by the Prince family. Leave it to the British—during the Revolutionary War, the British chopped down 3,000 cherry trees to make supports for hop vines, used in brewing beer. George Washington visited the nursery in 1789, as part of a presidential tour of Long Island. The site of the nursery is located just south of Northern Boulevard, between Prince Street and Flushing Creek. The site is completely built over and no trace of the nursery remains.

You can still find traces of the large nineteenth century nursery founded by the brothers Samuel Bowne Parsons and Robert Brown Parsons, descendants of one of the oldest and most socially prominent families in Flushing. Their nursery provided many of the trees used by Olmsted and Vaux in Central Park and Prospect Park. In the mid-1870s, Samuel Parsons opened a new

nursery near Kissena Lake. He even built a road, now known as Parsons Boulevard, to lead customers to his establishment. Samuel satisfied the eclectic and exotic horticultural tastes of the Victorian era and introduced many new plants into the trade, including the still popular Japanese maples. When he died in 1906, the city purchased the land of his nursery and combined it with several other parcels to form **Kissena Park**. In 1981, a group of summer interns happened upon an unusually diverse collection of trees near Rose Avenue and Parsons Boulevard. A survey of the species found nearly 100 separate species of trees, including many rarities. This 14-acre plot is now known as the **Historic Grove**.

Two other recent renovations have spiffed up Kissena Park. Historically, **Kissena Lake** was a natural pond. In the 1930s, it was drained and lined with concrete, making it a “bathtub lake.” Over the years, it became choked with algae and phragmites, an invasive weed. A recently completed renovation has left the lake sparkling, with a new aeration system, a natural edge leading to the lake, and a protected island for turtles and water fowl.

Just south of the lake you'll find the **Kissena Park Velodrome**, or bicycle track. This 400-meter, banked asphalt track was originally built in 1962 for the Olympic trials. It fell into disrepair, but a major renovation completed in 2004 reaffirmed its status as the robust hub of New York



Shaded playgrounds and ball fields are an Underhill Playground feature.

City's bicycle-racing community.

As you travel through any part of Queens, but especially the Flushing area, you cannot help but be struck by the borough's rich ethnic diversity. Approximately 140 different languages are spoken in Queens. Flushing, perhaps the oldest part of Queens, is home to some of its newest immigrant groups. In 1965, immigration laws changed to allow more immigration from non-European countries. According to the 2000 Census, the overall population in Queens increased since 1990 from 1.95 million to 2.22 million people, with 46 percent of those people foreign-born. The number of Asians increased from 229,830 to 390,164—an almost 70% increase. Today, more than one out of four residents of Flushing is of Asian descent, from countries such as China, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines,

Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. Of course, all of these countries have very different cultures. Flushing is a vital residential, cultural, and commercial center for all these groups.

Trip Description:

Most of this stretch of the Greenway is everything that a greenway should be: an extended corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists shielded by green and lively parks. At one end is the superb Queens Botanical Garden; at the other, the start of the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, which is now a protected trail traveling through a wooded corridor.

You come out of Flushing Meadows Corona Park on College Point Boulevard. When you reach College Point Boulevard, you'll be facing the **Queens Botanical Garden**. If you

KISSENA-CUNNINGHAM CORRIDOR

want to visit, cross College Point Boulevard to Blossom Avenue, then follow the perimeter of the garden to the main entrance on Main Street near Dahlia Avenue. The Queens Botanical Garden is a gem, a botanical garden that takes seriously its relationship to the diverse cultures and needs of Queens residents. For more information on hours of operation and upcoming events go to www.queensbotanical.org or call 718-886-3800.

Backtracking to College Point Boulevard, turn right, then make a left on Booth Memorial Avenue. You'll be climbing steeply. Walkers may want to follow the perimeter of the botanical garden along 133rd Street, then Elder and Peck Avenues, then right to 56th Avenue.

Bicyclists—keep with the flow of traf-

fic by staying on Booth Memorial Avenue, turning left at 137th Street. At 56th Avenue, turn right; after you cross Main Street, you'll be on the edge of **Kissena Corridor Park**. Follow 56th Avenue to 142nd Street. Turn right onto 142nd Street and left onto 56th Road to 150th Street.

Gardeners and appreciators of Asian vegetables will want to make a short sidetrip to visit a vast community garden mostly worked by people of Korean descent. The garden is noteworthy not only for its scale, but also for the interesting techniques and vegetables employed by the gardeners. To find it, turn left at 146th Street, then left again at Colden Street, which follows the northeastern edge of the Kissena Corridor Park. You'll find the gardens between Laburum and Juniper Avenues, appropriately, across from Rachel L. Carson Intermediate



Beautiful stone work can be found in Kissena Park.

KISSENA-CUNNINGHAM CORRIDOR



The sonic playground in Underhill Playground

School. Backtrack to Booth Memorial Avenue to get back on the Greenway.

At 150th Street, the Greenway turns left, into Kissena Corridor Park—look for the tell-tale greenway markers as well as large wooden posts painted brown. The trail wraps around the far end of the ball courts to meet up with Peck Avenue. Follow Peck Avenue until just before it stops at Kissena Boulevard. You'll notice the trail veers slightly to the left, providing a safe crossing to the corner of Rose Avenue.

Cross Kissena Boulevard into **Kissena Park**, passing through gates decorated with steel profiles of an old-fashioned railroad locomotive. A marker in the pavement designates the spot through which a rail line ran. Follow the signs, which designate a clear route through the park. To learn more about the natural and social history of the park, look for the staircase leading up to the

Kissena Park Environmental Center and the Historic Grove.

The route exits the park at 164th Street and Underhill Avenue. Follow Underhill Avenue until it ends at 170th Street. Bear right onto a trail that travels alongside the Kissena Park Golf Course.

The protected section of the trail ends at Utopia Parkway. If you're on a bike, dismount and, staying on the sidewalk, turn left and walk a few yards over to Underhill Avenue. Cross Utopia Parkway, hop back on your bike, and proceed on Underhill Avenue. You'll be crossing 188th Street and 58th Avenue. At 196th Street, the trail veers to the right to travel on the pedestrian bridge over the Long Island Expressway. At the end of the bridge you are now in **Cunningham Park**. Follow the trail as it passes between two schools, Public School

KISSENA-CUNNINGHAM CORRIDOR

179 on your right, and Saint Francis Preparatory School on your left. Just before Francis Lewis Boulevard, the trail hooks right, back towards 199th Street. This hook can be a little tricky to find: if you find yourself on the sidewalk along the Francis Lewis Boulevard, you've gone too far.

Near 199th Street, the trail begins to follow a wooded corridor, which is the route of the old Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. This segment of the Greenway, somewhat arbitrarily, ends along 199th Street near 75th Avenue. The Greenway bypasses one of the most interesting parts of Cunningham Park: the southern forest with its mature trees and kettle ponds. Unlike many forests in New York City, the understory here is largely intact, allowing many different ferns and wildflowers to flourish—a wonderful side trip before the next leg of our

journey. To get there, continue traveling forward on 199th Street, then cross Union Turnpike to enter the park. Bicyclists, please respect the delicate character of this forest by either locking up your bike or walking it as you explore this rare, nearly pristine area.

To get back to a subway, retrace the route back to Main Street, turn right to Roosevelt Avenue where you'll find the last stop on the 7 line, or go on to the last segment of the Greenway.



Community gardeners taking a break from the midday sun

KISSENA-CUNNINGHAM CORRIDOR



Alley Pond Park to Fort Totten

9

Length: 9.6 miles
Estimated travel time: Biking—1.5 hours; walking—3 hours
Attractions: Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, Alley Pond Park, Alley Pond Environmental Center, Joe Michaels Mile, Little Bay Park, Fort Totten Park, Throgs Neck Bridge, neighborhood of Bayside.

Character: Mostly sheltered park corridors with some on-street sections. The only heavy traffic is briefly encountered at Northern Boulevard.

Directions at a Glance

Starting at 75th Avenue and 199th Street in Cunningham Park

- Mile**
- 0.0 Follow the well-marked trail, which is the remnant of the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, over the bridge crossing at Francis Lewis Boulevard, then, near ballfields, tunnel under the Clearview Expressway.
 - 2.5 Trail ends at Winchester Boulevard. Turn around and backtrack.
 - 3.1 Trail exits park corridor at Cloverdale Boulevard. You will turn right, then travel forward on Cloverdale.
 - 3.2 Near 76th Avenue, trail turns right, enters park again. Follow marked trail to exit at Cloverdale and 73rd Avenue.
 - 3.7 Forward on Cloverdale Boulevard.
 - 3.8 Turn right on 69th Avenue.

- Mile**
- 4.0 Turn left on 230th Street.
 - 4.1 Turn right on 67th Avenue.
 - 4.2 Turn left on 233rd Street.
 - 4.5 Cross West Alley Road, then straight ahead on East Hampton Boulevard, to end.
 - 5.2 Soft left onto 232nd Street.
 - 5.3 Left on 50th Avenue, then right on Horatio Parkway.
 - 5.5 Right on Cloverdale Boulevard.
 - 5.8 Right on Northern Boulevard.
 - 6.0 Cross Northern Boulevard to beginning of Joe Michaels Mile. Follow marked route past Fort Totten to the base of the Throgs Neck Bridge.
 - 9.6 End near Utopia Parkway.

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN



ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTON

Subways

There are no subways close to this segment of the Greenway. At the end of the segment you can backtrack to the Flushing-Main Street stop on the 7 line (see inset map p. 70). The Long Island Railroad provides the closest public transportation. The Auburndale, Bayside, and Douglaston stops are relatively near sections of the Greenway. You need a permit to bring your bike on the train. The MTA's website has permits applications that you can mail in, or you can acquire a permit at Grand Central or Penn Station. (For the latest information, visit the MTA website at www.mta.info or call 718-330-1234).

Where to Eat

There are numerous restaurants on Northern Boulevard and a snack bar on Joe Michaels Mile that is open from April to October.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms can be found at Telephone Playground at 75th Avenue and Bell Boulevard, Alley Pond Park: 67th Avenue and 230th Street; Alley Pond Environmental Center; Crocheron Park: Little Neck Parkway and 33-35 Avenues; John Golden Park: 215th Place and 32nd Avenue.

Area History

This is one of the most historically rich segments of the Greenway. It travels through the outer reaches of

the old Flushing township to Little Neck Bay, encountering Fort Totten and the Throgs Neck Bridge. The segment begins by running through the corridor of the historic Long Island Motor Parkway, known as the **Vanderbilt Motor Parkway**. The idea for the Parkway was prompted in 1906 by William K. Vanderbilt Jr., a descendant of the family that presided over the New York Central Railroad and Western Union. Vanderbilt conceived of the route as a raceway, but it also served as a fast track for the wealthy to their estates on Long Island. Later, during the 1920s and prohibition, the route became known as Rum-Runners Road, since as a private road it was so frequently used by bootleggers outrunning the police. It was featured in the 1937 movie *Topper*, starring Cary Grant. The movie is worth renting to get a sense of the pastoral landscape of the area 60 years ago. You'll find the area is now built over with neat-as-a-pin middle-class houses. In the 1930s, Robert Moses undercut the Vanderbilt by constructing the free-of-toll Northern State Parkway. With its revenue severely reduced, the Vanderbilt shut down in 1938, to be shortly resurrected by Moses as a recreational path.

Alley Pond Park is at the other end of the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. Alley Pond Park is a vast, rambling park featuring some of the most dramatic kettle ponds and satisfying forest and marsh experiences in New York City. Kettle ponds were formed during the retreat of the big glaciers 20,000 years ago. Huge blocks of dense glacial ice became mixed with the rest of the rubbly glacial till. When the ice melted, it left a big hole in the ground. Twenty

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN



The Joe Michaels Mile section of the Greenway as it approaches its terminus near Fort Totten

thousand years later, these big holes remain as isolated ponds, largely fed by precipitation instead of streams or springs.

Lovers of big old trees will find plenty to adore throughout the park's woodlands. Be on the lookout for huge old tulip trees, as well as beech and red oak. The bottom of the kettles support red maple swamps. Bird watching is popular, thanks to the park's varied habitats. And the park is able to support the most varied amphibian population in New York City outside of Staten Island.

The area has a long human history. The Matinecock were the first nation to inhabit the area. In 1637, a man of European descent named Thomas Foster acquired 600 acres surrounding Alley Pond and, in 1663, built a permanent home. Forays by the Matinecock were still occurring, and

the house was fortified with stone walls. Around 1750, Alley Creek was dammed and its energy harnessed for a grist mill. The area became a commercial center, with commercial vessels traveling up Alley Creek. In 1821, the north shore's first post office was installed near the grist mill. A stagecoach ran between Douglaston, at the mouth of the creek, and Brooklyn. The area even had its own notoriously rowdy bar, named the Bumble Bee's Nest.

Unfortunately, during the 1950s the park fell victim to habitat fragmentation in connection with the building of the Long Island Expressway/Cross Island Parkway Interchange and cloverleaf. Even Alley Pond, after which the park is named, was partly filled in to create a bridge base for the Expressway. (The Pond has recently been restored in a different location). By the late 60s, the remnants of the

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN

park were critically degraded. Its gullies were favorite dumping grounds, especially for cars. In the face of that and of plans for more highway construction through the park, filling in of Pea Pond, and elimination of many of the park trails, a vibrant citizens movement emerged to save and reinvigorate the park and its habitats. In 1969, an umbrella group called the Alley Restoration Committee hosted a “Walk in the Alley.”

The Alley Pond Environmental Center provides education on the environments, creatures, and issues of the park, and preserving the environment in an urban setting. You’ll find their offices at 228-06 Northern Boulevard, just east of the Cross Island Parkway. Visit their website for information on current programs and events: www.alleypond.com or call 718-229-4000.

You’ll notice that this is a hilly area. Alley Pond Park follows the slope of the glacial moraine down to Little Neck Bay, and the Greenway goes right along with it, weaving in and out of the park and local sideroads. Little Neck Bay is a glorious natural setting, and indeed the Queens neighborhood of **Bayside** was the preserve of the rich and famous, including many of the early film stars of the 1910s and early 20s. The film industry was new and Queens was a major production center. Perhaps comedian W.C. Fields is its best remembered resident. It is also the location of silent film star Rudolph Valentino’s summer home, which is now a restaurant called Caffé on the Green. Escaping the rampages of highway construction, Little Neck Bay’s opposite shore in Nassau County still preserves its posh suburban character.

The Greenway curves past **Fort**

Alley Pond



ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN

Totten, a historic Army base, a large portion of which was transferred to the Parks Department and opened to the public in 2005. A bucolic military campus featuring open space areas, military fortifications dating back to the Civil War, and turn-of-the-century historic buildings, Fort Totten represents an exciting new addition to the City's park system. The fort, originally called the Fort at Willets Point, was established in 1857 as a major component in the defense system of New York Harbor. Its sister fort, Fort Schuyler, can be spotted across the bay on the Bronx side of the Throgs Neck Bridge. Together, both forts formed a pinch point, or narrows to prevent enemy ships from entering the East River from the Long Island Sound.

Located on the northern end of Fort Totten, the **Historic Battery** is the site of fortifications dating from the Civil War, the late nineteenth century, and the early twentieth century. Fort Totten is also home to the Officers' Club which is designated a local historic landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Located adjacent to the fort is **Little Bay Park**, a waterfront park which, like Fort Totten, offers sweeping views of Long Island Sound, Little Bay, and the Throg's Neck Bridge.

Trip Description

The Greenway proceeds easterly on Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. Built for motorcars, today this part of the

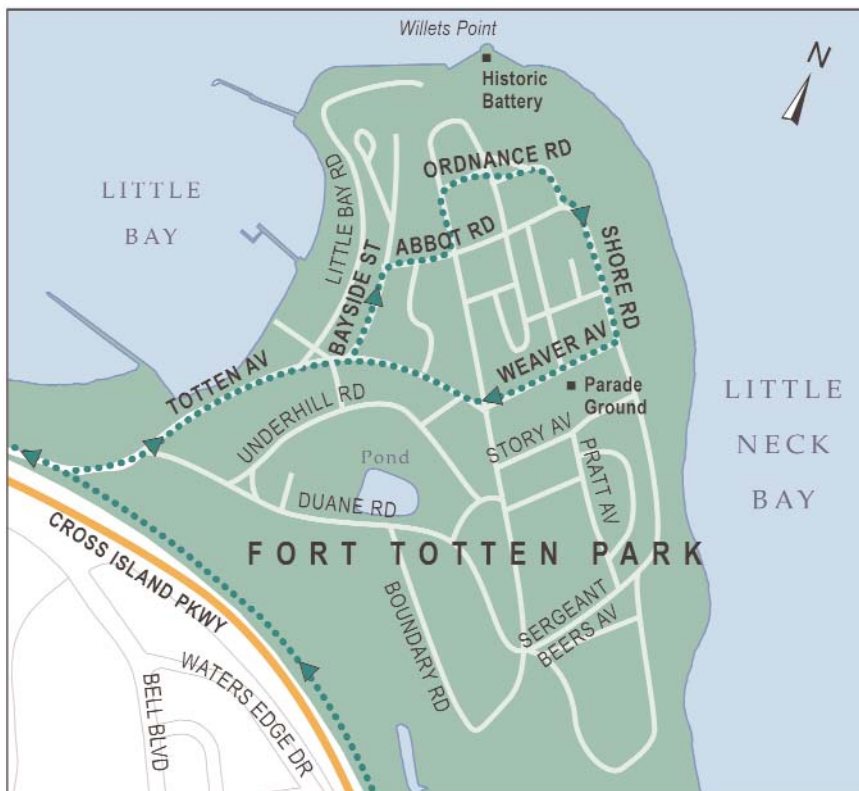


The fortifications of Fort Totten, now New York City parkland

Greenway is popular with all manner of human-powered recreationists. On a typical excursion, you will encounter folks out for a heavy-duty work-out or just an afternoon stroll with the family. Bicyclists, follow the well-marked trail to its end on Winchester Boulevard. Pedestrians may want to turn into the main part of the park a little bit sooner.

To avoid erosion and conflicts with pedestrians, most of the park's natural paths are off-limits to bicycle riders. In order to explore some of the more interesting areas of the park, you will need to dismount. One such attraction is **Little Alley Pond**. To find it after backtracking from Winchester Boulevard, you will stop short of the Cloverdale exit. Instead, after crossing the bridge over the Grand Central Parkway, you will turn right at the second path. You'll soon encounter Little Alley Pond, a classic glacial kettle pond. The stairs a little further on, have a convenient asphalt ramp for walking your bike if you have one. Poke around the pond a bit, and then return to the trail.

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN



Continuing on, you should find a Greenway sign directing you to the trail exit at Cloverdale Boulevard off to your right. In any event, you can see Cloverdale from the trail. Move forward on Cloverdale and very shortly, near 76th Avenue, a Greenway sign will indicate a right turn back into the park. Follow the signed route to the trail exit at Cloverdale and 73rd Avenue. You will find yourself in a quiet residential neighborhood, although the traffic on 73rd Avenue can be a bit speedy.

Carefully cross 73rd Avenue to move forward on Cloverdale, then turn right

on 69th Avenue. You will turn left again on 230th Street, right on 67th Street, then left on 233rd Street. What you are doing is following the contour of the park in a zig-zag manner.

Continue on to West Alley Road, which you will cross (carefully) to the beginning of East Hampton Boulevard. There is a glorious trail called the **Tulip Tree Trail** that begins near here. At one time, the Tulip Tree Trail was part of a series of bike paths that Robert Moses designed next to many of his expressways. Access to this trail for bicycle transportation has been blocked. The compensation to

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN

the loss of this trail is the fact that the route down to Little Neck Bay is all downhill. Follow East Hampton Boulevard to 50th Avenue. Keeping the park on your right, follow 50th Avenue to Horatio Parkway where you'll veer right, then turn right again onto Cloverdale. The now "cherry-stemmed" Tulip Tree Trail begins very shortly on, opposite the end of Birmingham Parkway. This is a highly recommended side trip.

Continuing down Cloverdale, you'll soon pass pleasant Oakland Lake, which is a good place to stop and sit on a bench while watching the passing ducks and people.

Turn right on Northern Boulevard. Kitty-corner from the **Alley Pond Environmental Center**, cross Northern Boulevard to the beginning of **Joe Michaels Mile**, a spectacular—and very popular—pedestrian/bicycling route along Little Neck Bay. Take it slow and be careful here; you'll want to appreciate the pleasant homes with private docks across the bay, the boats, the fishermen, the birds, and the refreshing break from vehicular traffic.

At 212th Street right before Little Bay Park is Fort Totten Park. Take a side trip through this bucolic park by entering through Totten Avenue. Bear left at the triangle onto Bayside Street. Go up a slight hill and make a right onto Abbott Road. Past the ballfield, make the first left onto North Loop and then a right onto Ordnance Road. Go to the end and make a right onto

Shore Road. Make a right onto Weaver Road (in front of gazebo) and pass the historic parade grounds and the Commanding Officer's house. At the end of the road make a right back onto Totten Avenue, view the Officer's Club, and exit the park.

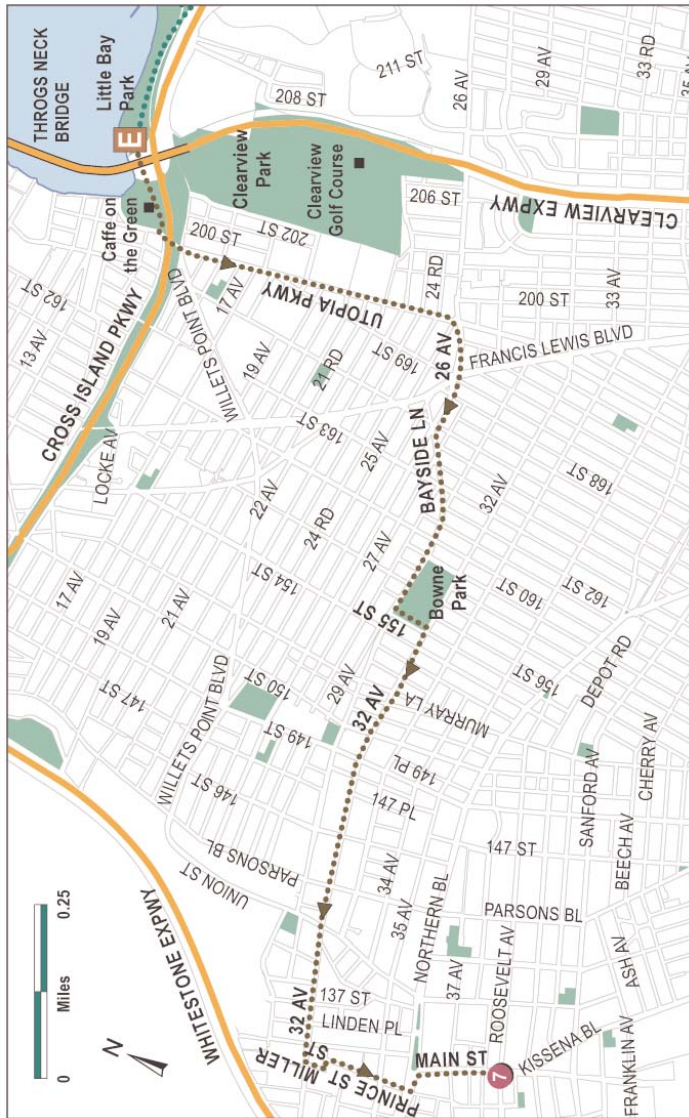
As you leave Fort Totten Park, you will be entering Little Bay Park. The Greenway ends just past the Throgs Neck Bridge. There is no convenient subway stop nearby.

To get to the Long Island Railroad, follow Utopia Parkway to Station Road (about 0.8 miles) and turn left to reach the Auburndale stop.



Little Bay Park jetty and Throgs Neck Bridge

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN



To get back to the 7 subway station in Flushing, follow these directions:
(See map).

- Left on Utopia Parkway.
- Right on 26th Avenue, crossing Francis Lewis Boulevard.
- Left on Bayside Lane.
- Left on 155th Street (far corner of Bowne Park—a welcome relief).
- Right on 32nd Avenue.
- Left on Miller Street, rounding the square to Prince Street.
- Right on Prince Street.
- Left on Northern Boulevard, go one block.
- Right on Main Street to subway stop.

ALLEY POND PARK TO FORT TOTTEN

C onclusion

We hope you find this guidebook useful and that you will take advantage of the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, and that you will take advantage of connections to the 13-mile Shore Parkway Greenway along Brooklyn’s waterfront and the Rockaway Gateway Greenway. Thanks to a significant commitment to expanding waterfront access, the importance of greenways has increasingly been recognized, as demonstrated by the recent completion of the 32-mile Manhattan Waterfront Greenway. Future greenway projects will connect with the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway and extend the greenway system in both boroughs.

Among the projects in development are the Laurelton Southern Greenway, a 32-mile greenway, which will run along the southern and eastern shores

of Queens and eastern Brooklyn, connecting Highland Park to Fort Totten and Little Bay Park. The Queens East River and North Shore Greenway is a 10.6 mile greenway which will run from the Pulaski Bridge in Queens to the Flushing Bay Promenade along the East River and North Shore shorelines in Queens. Finally, the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway will run along Brooklyn’s East River waterfront from the Pulaski Bridge to Erie Basin and beyond to Pier 69 in Bay Ridge.

Greenways provide both recreational and public health benefits while helping to promote tourism, providing an alternative mode of transportation for both recreation and commuting. We hope you will take advantage of this and other greenways to get to your destinations. For further information on citywide greenways or greenway-related events, please visit our website at www.nyc.gov/parks.



City of New York
Parks & Recreation
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner



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Greenway Signage

The route is marked by the **Greenway logo**, a round green medallion



On-street Signage

Regulatory Sign



Pavement Marking



Greenway Safety Tips

Signal to Others. Establish eye contact with motorists to ensure that they know you are on the road. Cyclists and skaters should signal all turns and stops; sound your bell or call out a warning when approaching others, then pass safely on the left.



Beware of Car Doors. Motorists can unexpectedly open doors of parked cars. Ride in a straight line at least three feet away from parked cars.



Be Careful at Intersections. Avoid being in a turn-only lane if you want to go straight through an intersection.



Signal to Others. Sound your bell or call out a warning when approaching others.



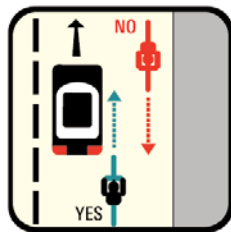
Obey Traffic Signs and Signals. Cyclists must obey all NYC Traffic Rules.



Stay on the Path. Ride only on designated paths to protect parks, natural areas and yourself. Riding off a designated pathway is dangerous and prohibited in NYC Parks.



Never Ride Against Traffic. Motorists and pedestrians are not looking for bicyclists riding against traffic. It is illegal and dangerous. Ride with traffic to avoid accidents.



Right-of-Way. Cyclists and in-line skaters must yield to pedestrians.



Advisory: Cycling is fun, but it can be dangerous and could result in serious injury. We have provided safety tips in this guide, but you are responsible for your safety and the safety of others. There are many hazards along the path, from cars and trucks to uneven surfaces to pedestrians and other cyclists. Take your time; wear your helmet; and look twice and then look again when entering traffic. Dismount when you have any concern for your safety or the safety of others. Safety is your responsibility. Moreover, all users of the Greenway must obey all applicable vehicular and traffic laws and regulations and all applicable New York City Department of Parks & Recreation rules and regulations.

Bike Shops

See individual maps for bike shop locations. The numbers on this page correspond to the numbers on the maps.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. Roy's Sheepshead Cycle
2679 Coney Island Ave.
(Ave. X and Ave. Y)
718-646-9430</p> | <p>5. Hardware City Ltd.
79-06 Jamaica Ave.
(78th and 80th Sts.)
718-296-2000</p> |
| <p>2. Brooklyn Bicycle Center
673 Coney Island Ave.
(Ave. C and Cortelyou Rd.)
718-941-9095</p> | <p>6. Gray's Bicycle
82-34 Leffert's Blvd.
(Metropolitan and
Abingdon Aves.)
718-441-9767</p> |
| <p>3. On the Move
400 7th Ave.
(12th and 13th Sts.)
718-768-4998</p> | <p>7. Spin City Cycle
110-50 Queens Blvd.
(Ascan Ave. and 73rd St.)
718-793-8850</p> |
| <p>4. Dixon's Bicycle Shop
792 Union St.
(6th and 7th Aves.)
718-636-0067</p> | <p>8. Flushing Bicycle Center
45-70 Kissena Blvd.
(45th Ave. and Holly Ave.)
718-358-0986</p> |
| | <p>9. Peak Mountain Bike Pro Shop
42-42 235th St.
(LIRR station and Northern Blvd)
718-225-5119</p> |

The NYC Cycling Map is available free at bike shops throughout the five boroughs, or by calling 311. The map can also be accessed online at the NYC Department of City Planning's website and the Parks Department's website, www.nyc.gov/parks.

For greenway-related problems or information on events within parks along the greenway, dial 311. Information on park events can also be found on our website, www.nyc.gov/parks.

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