

BRIDGING-the-GAP

A pedestrian bridge from East Harlem to Randall's Island needs your support!



A possible design for the pedestrian bridge

According to the New York City Department of City Planning, the East Harlem community (Community Board 11) is credited with having a high percentage of open space and parkland to the population, including 400 acres on Randall's Island. But, the reality for most residents of East Harlem is that they can't get to Randall's Island. A CIVITAS report entitled *Bridge the Gap. Connecting Manhattan and Randall's Island*, prepared by urban planning and bridge design experts, concludes that there is a need for greater pedestrian access to Randall's Island, that there is community support for it, and that it is feasible to build a new pedestrian bridge.

Why is a new pedestrian bridge needed?

Currently the only accessible walking routes to Randall's Island Park are across the Triborough Bridge at East 125th Street and via the pedestrian bridge at East 103rd Street. For a variety of reasons, pedestrian use of both bridges is severely compromised, bicycling is prohibited, and these routes provide no access for persons with disabilities. The 103rd Street bridge is closed for six months of the year, and, in any event, lands at the southern end of Wards Island, a good 20 minute walk from many of the athletic facilities.

What sports and recreational facilities are being developed at Randall's Island?

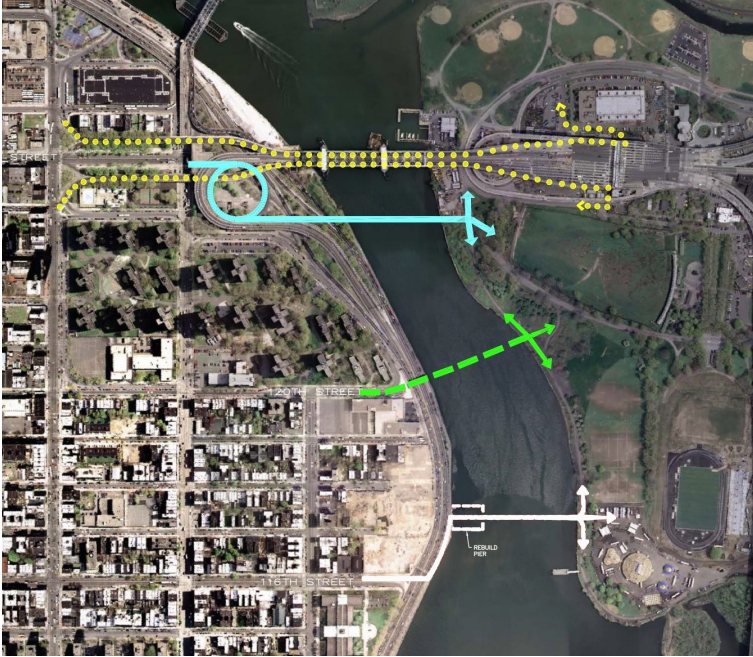
Randall's Island Sports Foundation (RISF) is currently improving and increasing the playing fields at Randall's Island Park. Upon completion, the Park will contain about 65 fields accommodating a range of sports including soccer, football, softball, baseball, rugby, cricket, lacrosse, and field hockey. Already in place is Icahn Stadium, a first class track and field complex. In addition, there will be picnic facilities and a bicycle path around the island.

Another educational and recreational amenity developed by the RISF is the boardwalk across the Little Hell's Gate Inlet, providing excellent views, interpretive signage, and drop down points to view upcoming salt marsh restoration and native wildlife.



To get involved, email info@civitasnyc.org

What would a new pedestrian bridge at East 116th Street or East 120th Street be like?



*Proposed locations of pedestrian bridge
Solid white line shows a proposed bridge at East 116th Street and
green dashed line indicates its location at East 120th Street.
The two other possible sites were deemed not practicable.*

Bridge Location There are two locations for the bridge, each with its own merits and drawbacks. One is at the East River Esplanade and East 116th Street, and the other is at the intersection of the East River Esplanade at East 120th Street and Paladino Avenue.

The East 116th Street alternative is described in the report as the “urban” option. This option would involve construction of a new pedestrian ramp over the FDR Drive and reconstruction of the old Washburn Wire Factory pier, on the East River at approximately East 117th Street, to act as a base for a new bridge over the Harlem River to Randall’s Island.

The East 120th Street alternative is simpler, more cost effective and could be described as the “residential” option. This would involve connecting a new bridge to an existing pedestrian ramp across the FDR at East 120th Street, a quiet but wide residential street.

Bridge Design There are two design alternatives presented for the pedestrian bridge to Randall’s Island. One is a cable-stay bridge and the other a retractile bridge. Either design alternative could be built at either location.

Bridge Cost The cost of the bridge to the City at 120th Street, according to 2006 estimates, is about \$25 million or more. The bridge at East 116th Street would require \$5-8 million in addition due to the construction of a new ramp over the highway and reconstruction of the old pier at East 117th Street. Matching state and federal funds would be sought.

Why existing pedestrian access is deemed inadequate

- The only pedestrian routes are those at East 125th Street and 103rd Street, neither of which has the current capacity or future potential for meaningful public access.
- They are not ADA-accessible.
- Their location is inconvenient for maximum pedestrian usage—the 103rd Street Bridge lands at the south end of Wards Island.
- The Triborough pedestrian walkway is often closed due to bridge maintenance and repair work. The pedestrian bridge at 103rd Street is left permanently in the ‘up’ position for six months of the year.

Public Health Issues—Asthma, Diabetes and Obesity

East Harlem has the highest rate of childhood asthma hospitalization in the United States, with one in four children suffering from asthma. In addition to high asthma rates, an alarming number of East Harlem residents also suffer from obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Healthcare officials indicate that physical inactivity promotes Type 2 diabetes. The open park space will provide East Harlem residents a place to exercise and will promote physical activity and good health.

Your support will bridge the gap!
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