

The QueensWay

VISION & PLAN

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



About the QueensWay

Tucked away in the heart of Queens, a 3.5-mile stretch of abandoned railway is poised for a remarkable transformation. Once a bustling branch of the Long Island Rail Road in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this Rockaway Beach Branch fell into disuse in the 1960s. Decades of neglect have turned this corridor into a forgotten space with decay and illegal dumping. But where others see abandonment, Queens residents see opportunity. For over 20 years, community members and local advocates have imagined the QueensWay—a vibrant, 47-acre greenway that connects six neighborhoods with walking and biking trails, provides safe recreation for families, and protects native plants and wildlife habitat. Trust for Public Land is partnering with Friends of the QueensWay and local leaders to turn this bold vision into reality, creating a green corridor that will bring joy, connection, and opportunity to the communities it serves.

In Queens, there is a great need for improved park space and access. Currently, Central and Southern Queens residents face significant challenges accessing their local Forest Park safely, with road traffic and few access points. And in Ozone Park, all parks are less than one acre. The standard for New York City is 2.5 acres of park space per 1,000 people, but in some of the neighborhoods surrounding the QueensWay, there is only 0.21 acres per 1,000 people. The QueensWay would change that.

With funding from New York State, we commissioned a QueensWay Plan to explore the opportunities and challenges of converting the site into a public park. In 2013, we brought in the design expertise of WXY and DLANDstudio (now Sasaki) to lead a comprehensive study of the area. This team worked hand-in-hand with local communities to assess the social, environmental, and economic factors critical to the park's success. Through this collaboration, a shared vision for the QueensWay began to take shape. Together, we'll transform this underused corridor into a dynamic, green destination.



Rails-to-trails projects work, and residents will finally have a safe and beautiful place to bike, jog, or take a stroll,” says Friends of the QueensWay’s Travis Terry.

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Health & Safety

The QueensWay is designed to prioritize health, safety, and accessibility, addressing concerns of nearby residents and park users alike. The 3.5-mile path will include ramped entries, comfort stations, and resting points,

making it welcoming for people of all abilities. Thoughtful lighting will focus on pathways and activity spaces for visibility and safety while minimizing light pollution for neighbors. Activity areas will be placed away from residential homes, ensuring privacy and peace for nearby families while creating a secure and inclusive environment for all visitors.



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By transforming a neglected corridor into a year-round recreational space, the QueensWay will promote community health and carbon-free transportation. Walking, biking, and other activities will offer safe options for exercise, supported by partnerships with schools and local groups to expand programming for youth. Seasonal plantings will enhance the trail, while fewer cars will improve air quality for the surrounding neighborhoods. Studies show that people living near parks are significantly more active, and the QueensWay will be a vital step toward building healthier, safer, and more connected communities.

Neighborhood Connections

The QueensWay will serve as a vital connector, linking six communities to some of Queens' most beloved destinations. Anchored by Forest Park, the trail extends south toward the Jamaica Bay Greenway and Gateway National Recreation Area, and north to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. Along its 3.5-mile stretch, it intersects with key commercial corridors and provides access to 28 schools within a 10-minute walk. More than just a greenway, the QueensWay will celebrate and connect the vibrant and diverse neighborhoods of Central and Southern Queens—some of the most culturally rich areas in the world—offering residents and visitors alike a gateway to explore the borough's unique character and communities.



245,000 people live within a mile of the QueensWay



6 neighborhoods: Rego Park, Forest Hills, Glendale, Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Ozone Park



Within a 10-minute walk:

- 28 schools
- 7 subway stops
- 35 bus stops

Ecology & Education

The QueensWay will transform an overgrown, neglected rail line into a vibrant learning landscape and a model for climate-smart infrastructure. Native plants and vegetation will create an arboretum-like setting, complete with outdoor classrooms, and interpretive signage that engage students, residents, and visitors in hands-on environmental education. Placed near schools, these spaces will make learning accessible and interactive. Climate-smart features like rain gardens will capture stormwater runoff, reducing flooding in nearby homes, backyards, and community spaces. This innovative approach will not only showcase sustainable design, but also support the city's stormwater management goals, creating a healthier, more resilient Queens.

Culture & Economic Development

The QueensWay will be a cultural greenway like no other, celebrating the rich traditions and diversity of Queens while creating new opportunities for community and local businesses. This vibrant space will connect visitors to the borough's renowned restaurants and local businesses, boosting economic activity in the neighborhoods it serves. Gathering spaces like the Elevated Zone and Forest Park Grove will become destinations for performances, public art, and cultural events. By restoring and illuminating the industrial structures of the old rail line, the QueensWay will honor its history while transforming it into a modern community resource. With an estimated one million annual visitors, each contributing \$7-\$21 per trip, the QueensWay will drive significant economic and cultural benefits for Queens and beyond.

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- The QueensWay
- Commuter rail station
- Subway station
- Express bus stop


Let's make the QueensWay a reality.

Bringing the QueensWay to life requires investment from multiple sources including public and private sources. In 2022, the City of New York announced a \$35 million investment for the QueensWay's first phase, the Metropolitan Hub, managed by NYCEDC and NYC Parks. In 2024, a transformative \$117 million federal grant through the Inflation Reduction Act was awarded to build the Forest Park Grove, advancing the QueensWay as a safe, vibrant space for residents.





The QueensWay has been a decade in the making, with foundational support from Friends of the QueensWay and Trust for Public Land. Since the QueensWay Plan was issued in 2014, funding from state grants and elected officials has supported the design and planning of its first sections. Community engagement will remain central to the process, ensuring the park meets local needs as construction proceeds in phases. Once completed, this 47-acre greenway will stand as a model for urban connectivity, offering health, safety, and economic benefits while honoring Queens' diverse communities.

Show your support for the QueensWay by signing our petition at tpl.org/queensway.

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