

## Recovery Snapshot: **LMDC East River Waterfront**



**Grantee:** New York City

**Administering Agencies:** Department of Parks & Recreation and the Economic Development Corporation

**Program Started:** 12/1/2005

**Program Budget –**

**Waterfront Access:** \$10 million

**Esplanade and Piers:** \$137.9 million

**Impact of Disaster:** The attacks on the World Trade Center and the continuing recovery have had a profound impact on Lower Manhattan's residents, businesses, and communities. In addition to the planning currently underway for the World Trade Center site, a series of projects that address short-term and long-term solutions to challenges facing Lower Manhattan's neighborhoods in the wake of September 11th are integral parts of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's (LMDC's) efforts to revitalize Lower Manhattan. The East River Waterfront Access and Esplanade and Piers projects are an essential component of the ongoing revitalization of Lower Manhattan. They represent a bold and ambitious plan for an important stretch of the East River waterfront that suffers from weak connections, a profound lack of amenities, and underutilization. .

**Project Description:** There are two separate components to the East River Waterfront project.

***East River Waterfront Access:*** LMDC has allocated \$10 million to connect the East River waterfront to the interior of Lower Manhattan by improving public access to and utilization of the waterfront area. The project will improve the east-west connection to the waterfront by enhancing the historic Catherine, Peck, Montgomery, and Rutgers slips that were once an integral part of the working waterfront and today function only as city streets and roadbeds. Once a place to berth ships for repairs and maintenance, the slips have been filled in and leave a wide corridor between city blocks. They will be redesigned as median open spaces with unifying elements such as seating, paving, plantings and a new vibrant pedestrian plaza.

***East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers:*** LMDC has allocated \$137.9 million to improve the two-mile stretch of waterfront between Peter Minuit Plaza and the East River Park. This project will solve a number of issues in the area that hinder the realization of the East River waterfront's full potential, such as underutilized spaces, parking lots below the FDR Drive raised roadway, vacant piers, and the absence of sidewalks. The planned improvements will provide solutions to this underutilization and the causes thereof through the creation of better access routes, open spaces and appropriate retail and community uses, all of which will not only stimulate economic recovery in the area, but will also

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benefit low- and moderate income persons in the area and meet the surrounding community's development needs.

### **Coordinating the Disaster Recovery Effort:**

*East River Waterfront Development Study:* In the fall of 2003, the city of New York, in coordination with LMDC, spearheaded the East River Waterfront design study. New York City's East River waterfront, which runs from the southern tip of Manhattan to the East River Park, is a long-neglected area cut off from Lower Manhattan's vibrant communities by poor access and deteriorating conditions along the water's edge. The East River Waterfront design study provided recommendations for improved alternative uses for the waterfront between the Battery Maritime Building and Pier 42 to the north, including the development of open spaces and development of sites for a wide variety of uses. Partial Action Plan 10, which allocated funds for this activity, was approved in February 2006.

*East River Waterfront Access:* In 2006, LMDC began working with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to carry out the environmental review process and to finalize any necessary agreements. LMDC worked with a project team consisting of the New York City Departments of Parks and Recreation, City Planning, and Transportation; New York City Hall; environmental consultant AKRF; and environmental legal counsel Carter Ledyard & Milburn, LLP. In the second quarter of 2006, project planning was ongoing and an archaeological analysis of the project area was completed while coordinating with a related Department of Transportation project. During the third quarter of 2006, LMDC and the DPR executed an agreement to begin design and implementation of the project. During the fourth quarter of 2006, the scope of the environmental review was expanded to encompass associated street reconstruction in a related project by the Department of Transportation. The project was also divided into two sections—one requiring a more substantial environmental review due to the potential for archaeological disturbances at Peck Slip, and the others requiring less review and approval.

In 2007, DPR procured two design firms to create the site plans and schematics for the slips. LMDC continued to work with the project team to coordinate environmental review and consult with the State Historic Preservation Office on historic resources as the designs for the slip improvements progressed. During the first quarter of 2007, Phase I Environmental Site Assessments were prepared for the five project area sites. The scope of the environmental review was also expanded to encompass additional Phase 1A Archaeological Assessment studies. During the second quarter, the city finalized the project scopes for each project area. The lead agency letters were distributed and AKRF continued work on the archaeological reports for each project section as well as the environmental assessment for Peck Slip. The team also consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the city in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act regarding designs, archaeology, and environmental effect determination. LMDC also met with Federal, State, and local transportation authorities to coordinate environmental reviews associated with roadbed reconstruction in and around Peck Slip. Additionally, LMDC submitted Coastal Zone Consistency forms to the New York State Department of State (DOS) for Peck, Catherine, Montgomery, and Rutgers Slips and the East River Park Connector. In August, LMDC received a general concurrence letter from DOS for these activities.

*East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers:* In 2006, LMDC began working with a project team consisting of the New York City Departments of Parks and Recreation, City Planning, and Transportation, New York City Hall, environmental consultant AKRF, and environmental legal counsel Carter Ledyard & Milburn, LLP. In 2006, the team completed the scoping progress to

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complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Draft scoping documents were mailed to 120 interested parties and notices were published in the local papers. A public scoping meeting was held and comments were collected and incorporated into the documents. A Draft EIS was then completed with another round of mailings, notices, and public meetings. In 2007, public comments were addressed and incorporated into a Final EIS, which was completed in 2007. A Programmatic Agreement was signed in the third quarter of 2007 with SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In November of 2007, the LMDC Board approved the NEPA Record of Decision and SEQRA Findings Statement, which was then circulated to the distribution list and noticed in the papers. The Final Conformity Determination was published in the Federal Register. Finally, LMDC submitted a Request for the Release of Funds to HUD in December. In 2008, the team continues to work on finalizing the schematic designs for the envisioned stretch of waterfront and coordinate with SHPO on historic resources in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement.

For more information, visit <http://www.renewnyc.com/ProjectsAndPrograms/waterfronts.asp>