THE GATEWAYS

A continuous Greenway around the island of Manhattan has long been a goal of planners, runners, joggers, cyclists and residents alike. The City has been in a process of reclaiming the Manhattan waterfront for recreational and other important water-dependent uses. As part of the Mayor’s vision, the East River Waterfront Plan not only creates a world-class waterfront for the Lower East River, but expands and enhances the connections all around the island. This two-mile stretch will complement the other 30 miles of waterfront which encircles the island and reconnects New Yorkers with the fantastic waterfront which surrounds them.
BATTERY MARITIME BUILDING PLAZA

The space in front of the Battery Maritime Building (BMB) is one of two critical gateways to the new East River esplanade. The current configuration creates a nearly impassable pedestrian connection between Battery Park and the East River Park. The entrance for the tunnel for the Battery Park Underpass, a traffic turnaround, bus drop-offs and traffic going into Whitehall Terminal all converge on roughly one acre directly in front of the BMB. The proposed solution, which will undergo design and engineering in the near term, will move the tunnel entrance approximately 250 feet to the northeast, enabling the construction of a new pedestrian plaza at the entrance to the BMB. Not only will existing traffic conditions be improved, this plaza will provide space for loading and unloading passengers when the BMB becomes the gateway to Governors Island. Where pedestrians currently face cars and a 4 foot wide sidewalk, they will find a public space that will be a destination for residents, office workers and visitors.
THE GATEWAY PROJECTS

EAST RIVER PARK CONNECTION

Pier 42 is a crucial link to East River Park and the Manhattan greenway north of the study area. Currently access to the park is granted via a 20 foot wide path which needs to accommodate vehicular, service, pedestrian and bike traffic. This access road is squeezed between the FDR Drive and the vacant Pier 42 shed which constrains the entrance to the park. The plan calls for the removal of this fence and the creation of a wider, safer connection to East River Park. Large, planted berms will separate the access road and the FDR visually and audibly from pedestrian traffic. In the future, both the pier and shed will be rebuilt to make way for a new large public gathering space on the river. The rebuilt structure provides the opportunity to create new habitat-friendly pier structure and a new public waterfront amenity. The shed would be replaced by a large urban ‘beach’ floating just above the waters of the East River. A new cove at Montgomery Street would create another waterfront destination by carving into the pier between piers 36 and 42 allowing for the mooring of boats and provide further neighborhood connections to the water.