BUILD IT NOW!
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The pages that follow contain some background information on the initiative to build a continuous Hudson River Greenway along the Riverdale shoreline including newspaper articles, a recent community board resolution and quotes from community leaders in support of the project. This magazine also contains photos of Riverdale RiverFest and promo for our 2015 Greenway events.

A Greenway on the Horizon

Riverdale has a great many things to boast and promote as being “The Riverdale gives us a waterfront vision that when realized will bring a new economic windfall to the community and a priceless recreational destination for visitors and residents alike.

The idea of a continuous recreational riverfront path, extending from the Battery all the way to Albany, is not new, but it has shifted into higher gear recently. And in this debate, the Riverdale section of the Bronx is the center of the Greenway universe.

The community has turned its attention to the complex challenge of spanning the South Bronx River gap and connecting the existing Hudson River Greenway on the Westside of Manhattan to its natural link in Yorkville, the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail, in a manner that won’t bust budgets, tear up busy streets, or invade private property.

But undeterred forces are as optimistic as they are influential — and as numerous as they are resourceful. The lead advocacy groups and individuals behind the effort are the Friends of the Hudson River Greenway in the Bronx and its Chair, Paul Elston and the Kingsbridge River Corridor Development Corporation’s (KRCV) Development Director, Tracy McCabe.

Over the course of 15 years, Mr. Elston has assembled a who’s-who of Riverdale activists, elected officials and organizations ranging from the Frick Visitor Center, Wave Hill, the College of Mount Saint Vincent and The Hebrew Home at Riverdale.

All would see a portion of the Greenway run through their backyard — is the powerless Senator Charles Schumer. One would think that with such a cast of characters, that shovels would always be in the ground.

While there may be some differences of opinion on how to get it done, there is near unanimity on the premise that it must get done. And it must get done on the Riverfront, a proposal by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTA) that studied the feasibility of an alternate route funded after significant public opposition, and the local community board has endorsed the all-waterfront route for the Greenway.

While the all-waterfront route may present more challenges and will undoubtedly take longer, the eventual payback to the community will be far greater. So says KRCV’s Tracy McCabe; “The vision is already in. The construction of the Greenway in Manhattan has led to an unprecedented cultural, economic and recreational resurgence on the Westside.”

Local residents and Chair of the Economic Development Committee of Community Board 8, Sergio Villaverde agreed, “Ride a bike or go for a walk along the Hudson River Greenway in Manhattan on a beautiful Spring weekend and it will become plainly evident what Riverdale has to gain from the construction of our Greenway, jobs, family-friendly fun and a reputation as a place where things are happening.”

Yaëlevy, co-chair of Riverdale RiverFest, an annual festival held on the campus of the College of Mount St. Vincent in North Riverdale to promote waterfront access, echoed that sentiment. “We are expecting 5,000 people who desperately want greater access to their river to attend this year’s festival if we build it, they will come.”

Things are most definitely happening in Riverdale.

— CMIT Station
Riverdale
A Special Natural Area District next to the Hudson River

The 315-mile Hudson River flows through eastern New York, southward past the state capital at Albany until it reaches New York City, before emptying into Upper New York Bay. It’s natural beauty is inspiring and one of Riverdale’s most defining features. Here’s what the community is saying about the greenway and the proposed Hudson River Greenway Project.

“Our community is fortunate to have the beauty of the Hudson River in our backyard. As a steward of this majestic river, the Hebrew Home supports the Hudson River Greenway project as an opportunity to bring communities together and share the rich history and heritage of our region. We are proud to be a friend of the Hudson River Greenway project, which will help make New York become more age and environmentally friendly.”
— Daniel Reingold, President and CEO, The Hebrew Home at Riverdale

“The College of Mount Saint Vincent and the Sisters of Charity are very happy annually to host and participate in RiverFest. We think that a greenway along the Hudson would be a vital community asset. There are so many things to work out to make the Greenway possible, but we are delighted that work has begun.”
— Charles Flynn, President, College of Mount Saint Vincent

“Bon Secours New York — Schervier Nursing Care Center is proud to sponsor Riverfest this year. Our mission calls for us to commit ourselves to helping bring people and communities to health and wholeness. A greenway along the Hudson, serving the common good, will enhance our community by bringing people into communion with the natural beauty of the river.”
— Carlos G. Beato, CEO, Bon Secours New York Health System

“Riverdale Country School is excited about the Greenway project. Our beautiful Lower School campus, known as the River Campus, benefits greatly from its proximity to the Hudson River, and we are sure our faculty would appreciate — and utilize — the Greenway on their commutes.”
— Dominic A.A. Randolph, Head of School, Riverdale Country School

“When you visit Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center in Riverdale, you can’t help but feel the majesty of the Hudson River as soon as you enter the grounds. Our mission is to connect people with the beauty of the natural world through our programs in art, education and horticulture. Therefore, we salute the efforts of the Hudson River Greenway project and RiverFest, and its goal to once again connect our community to the river.”
— Claudia Bonn, President & Executive Director, Wave Hill

“Leake & Watts has been fortunate to overlook the beautiful Hudson River and the Palisades for over a century. We support the Greenway project and look forward to being able to share our vista with community at large. The Greenway Project will provide a welcome benefit to the residents of New York City and Westchester alike, bringing our communities together through the enjoyment of one of most treasured natural resources.”
— Alan Mucatel, Executive Director, Leake & Watts
Celebrating the Creation of the Hudson River Greenway in the Bronx

"The verdict is already in. The construction of the Greenway in Manhattan has led to an unprecedented cultural, economic and recreational renaissance of the Westside. The Bronx deserves and is ready for the same."

Tracy McCabe Shelton, Executive Director, KRVC
The challenges of committing to a [Greenway] plan - funding, construction, infrastructure concerns, timing - are all very real, but the cost of doing nothing is even greater.

Rep. Eliot Engel
State Sen. Jeffrey Klein
Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz
Councilman Andrew Cohen
Follow Inwood’s path to the river

Posted 8/21/14

Our good neighbors to the south, in Inwood, may well have shown us a path out of the wilderness, and it’s a riverfront path at that. More than a year ago, supporters of Hudson River access in Riverdale were heartened by an infusion of federal planning money, courtesy of Sen. Chuck Schumer, only to have their hopes dashed when the results of the well-meaning but overblown planning efforts were revealed.

The Greenway the planners proposed was, for the most part, nowhere near the river and required millions of dollars worth of major road and bridge engineering work to connect it to Manhattan. After much Sturm und Drang at community board meetings last spring, planners were sent back to the drawing board.

Now they have an example to follow.

An Aug. 14 article in The New York Times, “New Trail Along the Hudson Goes Only So Far,” describes a Greenway in Inwood that not only fails to link up with the Bronx; it doesn’t even link with the waterfront trail further south in Manhattan.

Nevertheless, residents are thrilled. As The Times put it, “It may be a path to nowhere. But in a city whose denizens rush from Point A to Point B, the surroundings make up for the lack of a destination.”

Without a need for a destination, the Parks Department can begin almost immediately to greatly enlarge the tiny park near Metro-North’s Riverdale Station, creating a walkway as far north as the College of Mount St. Vincent and, if a single, narrow lane is sufficient, along the railroad tracks as far south as the Spuyten Duyvil triangle.

It would still be nice to have a way, down by the water, to get to Manhattan by foot or by bicycle and it would be nice if Metro-North were to share a bit of its landward real estate to make it easier to build the path, but the perfect shouldn’t be the enemy of the good.

Let’s demand of the city that we be given the same “path to nowhere” that Inwood is now enjoying.

One way to show your support, and have fun doing it, would be to come to the Kingsbridge Riverdale Van Cortlandt Development Corporation’s Greenway Gala on the campus of the Hebrew Home for the Aged on Sunday, Oct. 19.

In addition to a lively dinner party, KRVC is offering hot air balloon rides which promise to offer spectacular bird’s eye views of the Palisades in all their fall foliage. Don’t miss out.

"After 150 years of alienation from the Hudson River, it is time to reclaim access to the waterfront for the people of the Bronx, the City and the State."

Paul Elston, President, Friends of the Hudson River Greenway in the Bronx
WHEREAS, residents of Bronx Community Board 8 support a Hudson River Greenway extending from Spuyten Duyvil to Yonkers, providing runners, walkers, people with disabilities, cyclists and others an enjoyable riverfront experience with a superb view of the Palisades, as well as access to the Greenway to the north and the Greenway to the south, so that a continuous Greenway runs from Manhattan to Westchester:

WHEREAS, residents of Bronx Community Board 8 have advocated locating the Greenway route along the Hudson River in the 1998 report of the Bronx Advisory Committee to the Hudson River Valley Greenway:

WHEREAS, the 2003 197-a Plan of Bronx Community Board 8 supports a Greenway along the Hudson River and enhanced riverfront access for the community:

WHEREAS, local elected officials support a Hudson River Greenway and riverfront access for the community:

WHEREAS, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), with funding provided in part by Senator Charles Schumer, presented to the Parks & Recreation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 and most recently to a joint meeting of that committee and the Traffic & Transportation Committee, a conceptual study of a proposed Hudson River Greenway route connecting the Manhattan and Westchester portions of the Greenway, which includes a short-term inland route from the Henry Hudson Bridge to the city line at Riverdale Avenue and a long-term waterfront route from the Henry Hudson Bridge to Yonkers along the Hudson River:

WHEREAS, Metro-North has identified stabilization and bolstering of the embankment that protects the shoreline from flooding on its tracks as priorities on the Hudson Line through Riverdale:

WHEREAS, Metro-North has represented that Track 6 of the Hudson Line through Riverdale is necessary for its operations, the stabilization and bolstering of the embankment on the shoreline and to accommodate anticipated growth in ridership in present routes and possible Penn Station access on the Hudson Line in the future:

THEREFORE, Be it Resolved that:

This resolution supersedes the May 2012 resolution of Bronx Community Board 8 regarding the Hudson River Greenway.

Bronx Community Board 8 supports an all-river Hudson River Greenway.

Bronx Community Board 8 rejects the NYMTC proposal to widen streets to their un-built width, remove trees, reduce traffic and/or parking lanes on local streets, construct a cantilever mixed-use attachment to the Henry Hudson Bridge and build mixed-use bicycle paths, ramps or bridges through Riverdale Park.

That engineering and other feasibility studies be performed by the appropriate agencies along the length of the proposed Greenway in Riverdale to determine the best location for an all-river Greenway located west of the Metro-North tracks with the goals of minimizing costs of construction and operation without inhibiting and, if possible, enhancing Metro-North’s stabilization and bolstering of the riverfront embankment.

That NYMTC engage Metro-North to discuss modifications to the NYMTC proposal based on Metro-North’s plans for stabilizing and bolstering the riverfront.

That engineering and other feasibility studies be performed by the appropriate agencies to evaluate the connection of the Hudson River Greenway from Manhattan to the Bronx across the Harlem River at Spuyten Duyvil, via the Amtrak swing bridge or on a new purpose-built swing bridge.

That initial access to the Greenway be implemented by using either the existing bridge to cross the Metro-North tracks at West 254th Street or the Riverdale train station overpass and that the first segment of the Greenway be constructed on the west side of the Metro-North tracks from West 254th Street to Yonkers while other access points to the Greenway are investigated.

That until a Spuyten Duyvil Greenway connection can be implemented, a traffic study be performed in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to assess whether traffic lanes on the lower level of the Henry Hudson Bridge can be reconfigured to create a larger pedestrian and bicycle pathway across the bridge.

That our elected officials assist in obtaining funding for the feasibility studies and in addressing any concerns about the Greenway raised by Amtrak and the MTA.

That further consideration of an all-river Greenway route should continue under the auspices of Bronx Community Board 8 in cooperation with local residents, community groups, elected officials, government agencies, the affected rail companies and any other stakeholders.
Volunteer!
Contact cliffkrvc@gmail.com to sign up and learn more about our great opportunities to get involved and help Build It Now!

RiverFest - Celebrate the River in Riverdale!
Sunday, June 14, 2015
12 noon - 6 pm
College of Mount Saint Vincent
6301 Riverdale Avenue
Bronx, NY 10471