



HARLEM MEER SHORELINE & BOARDWALK RESTORATION PROJECT SUMMARY June 2024

Background/Project Objectives

This project will continue and build upon the work that the Central Park Conservancy (CPC) has done to date in and around the Harlem Meer, including the circa-1990 restoration of the Meer, the E110 and E108 playground projects, and the ongoing Harlem Meer Center project. Naturalizing the shoreline and expanding the waterbody surface will improve habitat, create a visually more appealing edge, and restore more of the original 19th-century character. Through the restoration of the shoreline path system, accessibility improvements will be made along the south shoreline and between the Lenox Avenue entrance, the Dana Center and Harlem Meer Center. This project also includes elements critical to the implementation of the North End Recirculation project and will contribute toward the resiliency and sustainability benefits for the Park and surrounding neighborhoods (through potable water savings, combined sewer overflow reductions, and water quality improvements) resulting from that project.

Existing Conditions

The project is located around the perimeter of the Harlem Meer, including the entire waterbody except those portions currently being reconstructed as part of the Harlem Meer Center (HMC) project.

The existing conditions around the Meer, except for portions currently being reconstructed as part of the HMC project, reflect the work done in 1990 by CPC, which touched on all portions of the waterbody and surrounding paths. Small sections of path have been reconstructed more recently in conjunction with the E110 and E108 playground projects, but the majority of the paths and associated infrastructure are due for restoration after 30+ years of wear since the last restoration. The shoreline conditions also reflect the 1990 work, with some portions having been naturalized (with the concrete perimeter wall having been lowered or removed and a wide planting margin introduced between path and shoreline) and other portions still defined by the perimeter wall (with a hard edge or narrow grass strip). Invasive plants (primarily *Phragmites*) have been spreading around much of the shoreline in recent years.

Project Goals

- Continued restoration of the Harlem Meer and shoreline to its historic character
- Support wildlife habitat through naturalizing the shoreline and expanding the waterbody surface
- Improve ADA access to the water and Park facilities including the Harlem Meer Center, Dana Center, and playgrounds

Scope of Work

- Realign and regrade pathways to be ADA accessible; replace asphalt paths
- Modify shoreline access areas and add curb for accessibility
- Relocate light poles, replace benches, rehabilitate the sand beach area on the east shoreline
- Plant native aquatics, remove invasive plant species
- Construct boardwalk over expanded Meer in south shoreline section