THE HARBOR RING

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Encircling New York Harbor by way of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the cities of Bayonne, Jersey City, and Hoboken, NJ, The Harbor Ring is a project for people who like to walk, bike, run, or skate in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. The 50-mile route integrates more than 28 miles of existing shared use paths and bikeways, including significant portions of the Brooklyn Greenway, a section of the East Coast Greenway, Ft. Wadsworth, the Bayonne Bridge pathway, the Hudson River Walkway, the Hudson River Greenway, and the East River Esplanade. The route also includes more than 20 miles of bicycle-friendly streets. The missing link is a Verrazano Bridge path. However, the balance of the route is ready for people to use and enjoy.

The Harbor Ring provides stunning views of the Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Jersey City Skyline, Statue of Liberty, the Verrazano Bridge, Ellis Island, and Newark Bay. It also provides residents and visitors with access to the region’s spectacular, but often underutilized waterfront destinations

- The Freedom Tower and the 9/11 Memorial
- Battery Park
- Brooklyn, Manhattan, Verrazano, & Bayonne bridges
- Brooklyn Bridge Park
- Pier 69
- Fort Hamilton
- Owl’s Head Park
- Fort Wadsworth
- Richmond County Bank Ballpark
- Snug Harbor
- Bayonne Park
- Liberty State Park

The Harbor Ring also passes through numerous vibrant business districts, including DUMBO, the Columbia Street Waterfront, Bay Street, Ocean Avenue, and downtown Jersey City, downtown Hoboken, and Battery Park City.

Rich with rail, bus, and ferry connections, accessing The Harbor Ring is easy. So whether you ride the whole route, or only sections, there is always a way home.

When complete, The Harbor Ring will not only offer unprecedented recreational opportunities, it will continue to establish the region as one of the nation’s most bike-friendly, an honor now deeply coveted by cities around the world. It will also will spur tourism in underserved neighborhoods around the region and will make the metropolitan area an even more attractive destination for regional, national, and international visitors.

The Harbor Ring is an advocacy project of Transportation Alternatives, New York City’s advocates for biking, walking and public transit.
THE MISSING LINK

Built in 1964, the Verrazano Bridge was initially planned with a pedestrian and bicycle path stretching between Brooklyn and Staten Island. While the path was never constructed, the bridge was ultimately engineered to accommodate one. In honor of the Verrazano’s upcoming 50th anniversary (2014), we’re advocating for the completion of the bridge, which will also allow for the completion of the Harbor Ring.

On December 2, 2012, the MTA announced the award of a five-year, $238 million contract to replace the upper level roadway surface of the Verrazano Bridge, a project that will start in 2014. For only a small incremental cost increase, the project can include the construction of bicycle and pedestrian pathways on the bridge. The follow pages list several reasons why incorporating the pathways in the project would be a great idea and would benefit residents and visitors to New York City for years to come.

Would the availability of a bike path across the Verrazano Bridge alone encourage you to use your bicycle for transportation to and from Staten Island?

*Sourced from the 2011 Verrazano Bridge Access Survey issued by The Harbor Ring Advocacy Team.
Why Build the Path Now?

The Verrazano’s Original Design Had a Path

Opened in 1964, The Verrazano Bridge was designed by the firm Amman & Whitney, who also designed the George Washington, Whitestone, Triborough, and Williamsburg bridges. The original design for the Verrazano included a bicycle and pedestrian path. In 1995, Amman & Whitney developed several alternatives for retrofitting the bridge to include pathways.

A World-Class Bridge for Tourism

The bridge’s 225-foot high, 4,260 foot-long center span is the longest in the Americas; its towers are seen from all five boroughs; all cruise ships and large container ships calling at the Ports of New York and New Jersey (5,000 annually) pass under the bridge; the views of New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty, and downtown Manhattan are spectacular. Rivaled only by San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge (which has a path), New Yorkers and visitors should have access to this unequaled kaleidoscope of city, sea, and sky.

Staten Island & Four Borough Connectivity

Staten Island is geographically isolated from the other four boroughs of New York City. Adding pathways on the bridge for bicycles and pedestrians will connect Staten Island to the other four boroughs in a meaningful way, allowing for interborough recreational and commuting opportunities.

Staten Island Ferris Wheel

New York City recently approved the construction of the world’s largest ferris wheel in Staten Island, with hopes that the wheel will be a major tourist attraction drawing visitors to Staten Island. The only viable public transport option presently is the Staten Island Ferry. The addition of bicycle access to the bridge, combined with the cities’ new bike-sharing program, will one day allow visitors to take a subway to Brooklyn, and ride across the bridge to the ferris wheel (and back), a day trip second-to-none for visitors as well as for residents of New York City.
Health & Recreation
As New York City becomes increasingly health-conscious, outdoor recreational opportunities abound all throughout the city. The Verrazano Bridge is an existing structure that with some limited modification can provide a healthy exercise outlet for the thousands of cyclists, joggers, and pedestrians that would cross the bridge every day.

Commuting/Sustainability
During the summer, fall, and spring seasons, 40,000 cyclists cross New York City’s bridges each day, in addition to the thousands of joggers and pedestrians that do the same. Paths on the Verrazano Bridge will provide an additional transportation option for Staten Island and Brooklyn commuters other than the traffic-clogged bridge, ultimately benefitting all bridge users.

Real Estate Value
Studies show that bikeways bring increased real estate values to stores and homes along the routes. Bikeways on both sides of the bridge will be heavily travelled if a path across the bridge is constructed, resulting in greater real estate values for those on both sides of the bridge, not to mention the increased tourism dollars that could be spent at local businesses.

The 2014 - 2017 Construction On The Bridge
With a major capital project scheduled, now is the time to build the paths. Waiting another generation will only make the path that much more expensive.

Natural Disasters & Emergencies
The only way to and from Staten Island after Hurricane Sandy was by automobile. New York University’s Rudin Center for Transportation studied Hurricane Sandy’s impact on New York City’s transportation infrastructure and recommended evaluating the addition of a bicycle and pedestrian path across the Verrazano Bridge. With an increase in bicycle traffic of 130%, such infrastructure on the East River bridges proved crucial in the days following Hurricane Sandy.