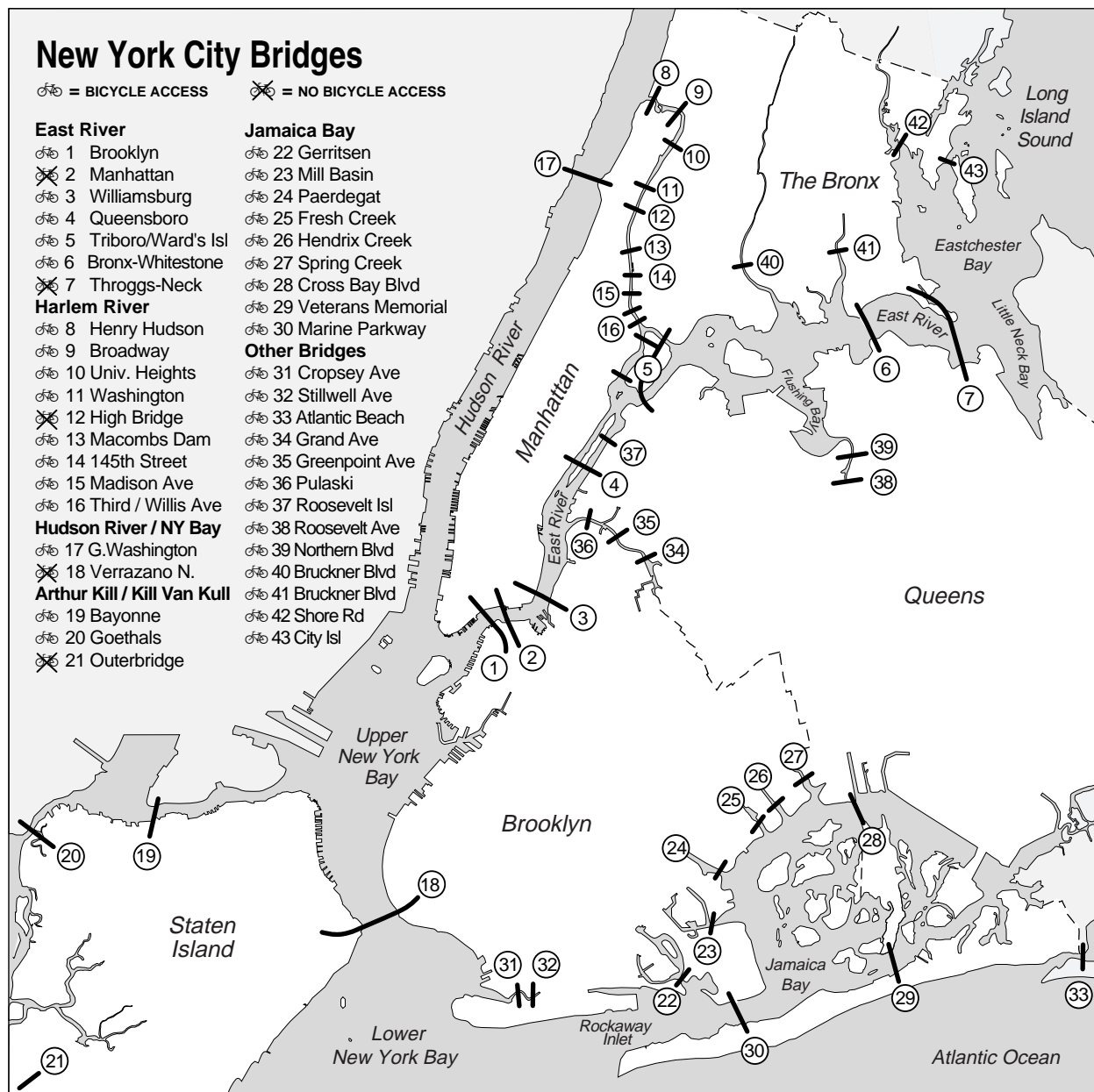


Bridges



New York City bridges

New York City has 43 major water crossings. Bicycle access over bridges is critical to the establishment of a successful bicycle network. Existing access over New York City's bridges ranges from safe and scenic to dangerous and difficult to non-existent. A number of the city's major bridges are under reconstruction, and

bicycle/pedestrian access improvements have been included in these efforts. In addition, the BND Project has identified a number of potential capital projects to create or enhance bridge access. The bridges and the responsible agencies are listed below, followed by brief descriptions of existing and potential improvements.

East River Bridges



Brooklyn Bridge

Brooklyn (DOT)

The city's oldest and most heavily used cycling bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge has a shared bicycle/pedestrian promenade. A major improvement by DOT in 1983 extended the promenade to the local street network in both Manhattan and Brooklyn. However, the Brooklyn terminus remains challenging for bicycles and pedestrians due to complex vehicular turning movements, heavy traffic volumes and the path's location in the center of east and west bound travel lanes. CDOT is currently considering a proposal for the Manhattan side which would connect the promenade directly with City Hall Park, reducing bicycle/motor vehicle conflict.

Manhattan (DOT)

The sidewalks located on both sides of the Bridge are currently closed. DOT is currently reconstructing the bridge, and the 10'6" sidewalk located along the bridge's western side is scheduled to be reopened in mid 2000.

Williamsburg (DOT)

Currently under reconstruction, a new bicycle/pedestrian path will include a number of improvements, including replacing the stairs at the Manhattan terminus with a ramp, and enhancing the visibility of the Brooklyn terminus by relocating the ramp from the interior to the exterior of the Bridge.

Queensboro (DOT)

Also under reconstruction, the Queensboro Bridge bicycle path is the city's second most heavily used. The reconstruction project will replace the path's steel grating with concrete and construct a barrier between bicycle and motor vehicles on the Manhattan approach. Due to the reconstruction, the path is currently closed to cyclists and pedestrians between 3 and 8 pm, Monday through Friday; DOT operates a free shuttle during these hours. The path is scheduled for reopening following the reconstruction. DCP will receive funding to study access improvements to the approaches, both of which are difficult and dangerous at the Manhattan and Queens termini.

Triborough Bridge (MTA)

Although paths exist along this bridge linking Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens with the recreational facilities at Randall's Island, access is made difficult by the stairs leading to the bridge paths. Signs directing cyclists to walk along the paths are usually ignored. In its recently released Randall's Island Access Plan, the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) recommends modifying the existing stairs and ramp on the Tri-borough Bridge for the Manhattan and Queens spans. The construction of new pedestrian bridges from all 3 boroughs and the establishment of ferry service were also proposed. Signs on Randall's Island directing cyclists to the existing Bridge paths are also needed as an immediate improvement.

Bronx-Whitestone (MTA) and Throgs-Neck (MTA)

Paths or sidewalks do not exist along either span. However, Queens Surface Corp., with assistance from DOT, installed bicycle racks on the QBX1 bus line in April, 1994 to bring cyclists across the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge. Cyclists board at 20th Avenue in Queens or Lafayette Avenue in the Bronx. This is the only bike-on-bus program currently operating in the region.

Harlem River Bridges

Eight of the nine bridges across the Harlem River provide shared bicycle/pedestrian access along sidewalks. Modest improvements, such as curb cuts and directional signage, would significantly improve cycling conditions along these critical crossings. Access along the scenic Henry Hudson Bridge (MTA) is currently limited to the narrow path on the lower span, though a wider, inaccessible path exists on the upper span. The MTA should consider creating access to the upper path, as noted in the 1992 DCP study. The closing of High Bridge, a safe and scenic bicycle and pedestrian crossing, should be reassessed by DPR.

Hudson River / New York Bay Bridges

Although a path exists along the George Washington Bridge (PANYNJ), the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge (MTA) is inaccessible to bicycles and pedestrians. DCP is currently studying possible access options, including a bike-on-bus program, the dedication of an existing lane for bicycles and pedestrians, and the construction of a new path or ferry service.

Arthur Kill / Kill Van Kull Bridges

Bayonne (Port Authority of NY & NJ)

Currently under reconstruction, the bicycle/pedestrian path's access could be improved through signage and the replacement of stairs with a ramp on the New Jersey side.

Outerbridge Crossing (Port Authority of NY & NJ)

Bicycle/pedestrian access was removed in 1963 on this Staten Island-New Jersey crossing.

Goethals (Port Authority of NY & NJ)

The current path is extremely narrow and is officially closed to cyclists. Long-term plans for a new bridge include a bicycle/pedestrian lane.

Jamaica Bay Bridges

Shore Parkway Bridges (DOT)

The six bridges along the Shore Parkway bicycle path have combined bicycle/pedestrian sidewalks. Hendrix and Spring Creek Bridges were reconstructed in the mid-1980s, and DOT has received state, federal and city funding to upgrade the Gerritsen, Mill, Paerdegat and Fresh Creek Bridges. DOT is currently in the design process.

Cross Bay Blvd/Congressman Joseph P Addabbo Bridge (DOT)

Reconstructed in 1991, an on-street lane and a separate pedestrian/fishing path were installed on this bridge.

Marine Parkway/Gil Hodges Bridge (TBTA)

Sidewalks exist on this Bridge, with signs instructing cyclists to "walk your bike". Although narrow, cyclists, pedestrians and fishers safely share these narrow paths. TBTA has included a multi-use path in its plans for the reconstruction of the Bridge, which is part of the proposed Rockaway-Gateway Greenway.

Additional Bridges

In addition to the city's major water crossings, bridges across industrial areas, railyards and smaller water bodies also need to provide better bicycle and pedestrian access. Listed below are two of the more popular crossings in need of improvements.

Queens Boulevard

Providing a direct connection to Long Island City and the Queensboro Bridge, this bridge over the Sunnyside rail yards is a critical component of the Network. Because of the narrow roadway width and heavy traffic volume, cyclists currently ride on the sidewalks, creating safety concerns.

Roosevelt Avenue

Similar to the Queens Boulevard Bridge, the sidewalks along this bridge currently serve both bicycles and pedestrians. Conflicts can emerge, especially during events at the adjacent Shea Stadium. Mitigating the bicycle/pedestrian conflicts on both the Queens Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue Bridges requires further study.