



Joint Press Release

By CIVITAS and Esplanade Friends, founding members of CEHW

March 09, 2021

The **Coalition for the East Harlem Waterfront**, a coalition of 25 East Harlem, City-wide and regional civic organizations, is sending a letter to Mayor de Blasio today thanking him for his commitment to invest \$284 million, in addition to \$75 million already committed, in rebuilding and improving the East River Esplanade from 94th to 125th Streets. A set of photographs accompanying the letter displays graphically the decrepit condition of this section of the Esplanade with sinkholes, a condemned pier at 107th Street and hard barriers blocking access to three blocks from 114-117th Streets that puts a lie to the vision of a continuous functioning Manhattan Waterfront Greenway. The message of the letter is that, given these circumstances, the Mayor and City Council should include these funds in the forthcoming capital budget and pursue ways to fast track the repair and rebuilding of this segment, including the collapsing pier at 107th Street. The neglect of this section that could otherwise provide much-needed recreational access for the East Harlem community is a profound social injustice. The members of this Coalition are listed at the end of this press release.

Friends of the East River Esplanade

“Esplanade Friends is thrilled and exceedingly grateful that after a decade of advocacy and visioning for Pier-107, our dream of a reinvented Pier for East Harlem is a giant step closer to reality! The children of the community—and we hope generations to come—will treasure the true joy of fun along the River.”

Jennifer Ratner, President

CIVITAS

“CIVITAS, an Upper East Side and East Harlem community-based organization, has been advocating for a major City commitment to rebuild and restore the long-neglected and deteriorating East Harlem Esplanade from 94th to 125th Street with its sinkholes, fences closing off major sections and the pier at 107th Street padlocked. We therefore applaud the Mayor's announcement that the City will allocate \$284 million to rebuilding the East Harlem Esplanade. It is critical that this investment be included in the City's forthcoming annual capital budget and that the City pursue all feasible means to fast-track this project.” *Jim Tripp, Board VP, and William Bateson, AIA Board Member*

The El Barrio/East Harlem Fishing Club

“The El Barrio / East Harlem Fishing Club is excited about the attention the East River Esplanade is attracting, its an underutilized community resource that will soon be transformed into a family sporting waterfront with support from City, State and Federal funds- we applaud this civic victory for the residents to enjoy!”

Roger Hernandez, Jr.- President of East Harlem/ El Barrio Fishing Club



New York Harbor School

“As we become increasingly conscious of the legacy we leave our children and fellow New Yorkers, it’s clear that our economic, political, social, and even our global climate, depend on the well-being and health of our marine natural resources. By empowering our school children to participate in the stewardship and restoration of NYC’s coastal ecosystems - including the East River Esplanade - we’ll be forging a more sustainable future for all of our fellow New Yorkers, including our young scholars, and the millions of others that visit our beautiful city.”

Mauricio Gonzalez, M.Sc. New York Harbor School

New York League of Conservation Voters

“We are pleased that Mayor de Blasio announced an investment in the East River Esplanade and we urge the City to include the funding in the next budget. Restoring the esplanade will increase access to greenspace, enhance the waterfront, and improve air quality in East Harlem while prioritizing communities that are most impacted by the effects of climate change. We look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders as this important project is constructed.”

Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters

New Yorkers for Parks

“We applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio for allocating \$284 million to repair the East Harlem Waterfront. This is the level of commitment we need from the Mayor for the citywide parks budget at a moment when parks are, more than ever, New Yorkers’ backyards, kitchens, and essential community spaces,” said Adam Ganser, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks. “Last year the City cut funding for parks at a crucial moment. Hopefully these funds are a harbinger of a broader reinvestment to come in 2021”

Adam Ganser, Executive Director

Regional Plan Association

“We applaud the Mayor’s commitment to the thriving East Harlem waterfront, For too long this stretch of waterfront has suffered from underinvestment in its infrastructure. This project will help complete a continuous loop of public access around the entire Manhattan waterfront, including sections of RPA’s proposed [Five Borough Bikeway](#).”

Robert Freudenberg, Regional Plan Association Vice President, Energy and Environment

Tri-State Transportation Campaign

“As New York climbs its way out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the city must ensure that equitable investments are made to improve public infrastructure that promotes health via active mobility, such as biking and walking, and addresses our climate needs via resilient planning,” said Janna Chernetz, Deputy Director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “Mayor de Blasio should fulfill his \$284 million commitment for the Esplanade section of the Harlem riverfront to revitalize green space in an area where there is less open space per capita than any community in all five boroughs, bringing health and climate benefits for New Yorkers for generations to come.”

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

“We are grateful that Mayor De Blasio has set aside \$284 million for much needed repairs to the East Harlem waterfront,” said Peggy Shepard, Co-Founder and Executive Director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice. “But we would also like to see a significant investment in East Harlem



as a whole, increasing its environmental and economic health while safeguarding its culture and history from gentrification. For example, a new East 125th Street transit hub – an Uptown Grand Central Station at the convergence of the Metro-North Railroad, Lexington Avenue Line, and the extension of the Second Avenue Line – could benefit the community and reinvigorate the local economy much the way the new Daniel Patrick Moynihan Train Hall has done in Midtown.”

Peggy Shepard, Executive Director

The following list is made of civic groups and elected officials who endorsed the letter to the Mayor.

Coalition members:

Alliance for Kips Bay
Bike New York
Billion Oyster Project
Concrete Safaris
Community Board 8
Community Board 11
CIVITAS
East River CREW
El Barrio Fishing Club
Friends of the East River Esplanade
Friends of the Upper East Side Historic District
Harlem One Stop
Lower East Side Ecology Center
New York Harbor School
New Yorkers for Parks
New York League of Conservation Voters
NYS Assembly – Robert J. Rodriguez
NYS Assembly – Rebecca A. Seawright
Regional Plan Association
Shorewalkers NYC
Transportation Alternatives
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Uptown Grand Central
Waterfront Alliance
WE ACT for Environmental Justice