



Skanska completes first phase of East River Waterfront Esplanade

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Manhattan, NY Skanska has completed the first phase of the East Midtown Waterfront Esplanade and East River Greenway development along FDR Dr. The project, awarded to Skanska by New York City Economic Development Corp. (NYCEDC) in 2019, is part of a larger East River Waterfront esplanade vision that will stretch for 22 blocks and fill a major gap in the 32-mile Waterfront Greenway upon completion.

The 49-month project included the construction of a new in-water structure that serves as a public esplanade along FDR Dr. and a new public park space that spans nine blocks to create new, connected, and safe spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists to enjoy that portion of the waterfront. Additionally, a myriad of environmental and technological innovations were implemented, including engineered soil, LTE and GPS tracking for construction barges, advanced timelapse cameras, Building Information Modeling (BIM) and underwater drone inspection.

To fortify the element of environmental resilience, engineered soil was placed within Silva Cells to collect stormwater and nurture newly planted trees, post-planting, the use of certified compost for soil enhancement, recycling local organic materials and reintroducing vital nutrients were all active project components.

GPS tracking was deployed to monitor construction barge locations and status in real-time, enhancing safety through predetermined geo-zones triggering alerts. Additionally, strategically positioned advanced timelapse cameras and underwater drones equipped with cameras and sensors contributed to ongoing safety and longevity of the project via documenting progress, monitoring the work environment, and inspecting submerged structures for any defects and erosion.

In tandem with sustainability and technological practices, the project not only led the way in innovation but also championed supplier diversity, creating valuable opportunities for a multitude of local and diverse vendors in the area.

Waterfront projects are the most challenging to provide opportunities for diverse firms but through proactive outreach to the diverse business community and specifically designing the bid package process to provide more opportunities for diverse firms, Skanska was able to so surpass the 17% MWBE goal. The project is now projected to reach 31% MWBE participation.

Construction on the project began in November of 2019 and the team achieved substantial completion in December 2023.

“The opening of the East Midtown Greenway and Andrew Haswell Green Park represent another major step forward by the Adams administration to finish the long-envisioned Manhattan Greenway,” said NYCEDC president & CEO Andrew Kimball. “These remarkable capital projects will not only improve quality of life for New Yorkers but expand opportunities to commute by bike or foot while enjoying spectacular views on the East River. NYCEDC is thrilled to be a part of this project with our colleagues at the Parks Department, which furthers our commitment of making New York City a great place to live, work, and play.”

“We are delighted to have once again partnered with EDC to deliver a project that not only transforms New York City’s waterfront into a fun, vibrant and attractive place for residents and visitors to spend their time, but also strengthens our city’s coastline to stand up to the looming effects of climate change,” said Sean Szatkowski, executive vice president – general manager, Skanska USA Building. “This project also demonstrated our ability to utilize new and emerging technologies to build a state-of-the-art in-water structure, as well as our commitment to maximizing opportunities for small and diverse suppliers in the communities where our projects take shape.”