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Manhasset Bay Walk expansion planned as town seeks to create regional promenade

January 22, 2015 By SCOTT EIDLER scott.eidler@newsday.com



Art exhibits line Manhasset Bay Walk in Port Washington, seen on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2015. (Credit: Newsday / Audrey C. Tiernan)

North Shore residents can soon enjoy longer walks along Manhasset Bay.

A roughly mile-and-a-half extension is planned for the Bay Walk path in the Village of Port Washington North, envisioned as a regional promenade.

long-term plan is to connect the half-mile path the village opened in 2008, south to the town's public dock and north to Manorhaven Beach Park.

Town of North Hempstead officials say the

A timeline for completion and final costs is being tabulated, but the village this spring plans to use \$1.5 million from the state, the town and its own coffers, to add to the Bay Walk park and outdoor museum. Planned are a kayak launch, parking lot, new benches, tables, and a rain garden to help irrigate the land.

Art exhibits already line the walk. The collections include mosaic tile, metal steel sculptures, carved bronze statues and photographs and murals depicting scenes of Port Washington's nautical history.

The town is seeking permits from the DEC to begin extending the Bay Walk, which local leaders envision as a 1.8-mile path between Shore Road and the bay, home to a newly renovated pier for boaters and visitors.

The path will be "one beautiful contiguous piece going forward," Mayor Bob Weitzner said, adding the project could provide a seamless integration of the town and village walkways. "If it's done right, [visitors] could not distinguish between the Port Washington North side and the town side," he said.

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Residents and municipal officials dreamed up the Bay Walk in the mid-1990s.

The area — underutilized and marked by "commercial blight" -- has since been reborn, Weitzner said.

Stop & Shop anchors a shopping center that replaced a storage site for oil tanks. A dilapidated oil transfer pier reopened for boaters in 2009.

Officials say connecting to the town's dock is convenient for boaters and visitors who navigate the Port Washington peninsula. They can dock at one of the piers, walk to Manorhaven Beach Park or dine at restaurants in three villages, including Baxter Estates and Manorhaven.

"The current path from the town dock to the Bay Walk is a bunch of sidewalks on Shore Road or cutting through areas," Weitzner said. The aim is for people to think "they are along this master trail, can see our Bay Walk and feel that they are not missing anything."

New artwork planned for the museum includes a stained glass structure built by local artist Aaron Morgan, who died in December at age 71, after contributing several works to the Bay Walk. The latest Morgan piece portrays local yacht clubs and even a model yacht club — a "whimsical" touch, said Town Supervisor Judi Bosworth.

The spot has the potential to become "the Key West of North Hempstead," Bosworth quipped. "People can actually go here, watch the sunset and enjoy."

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