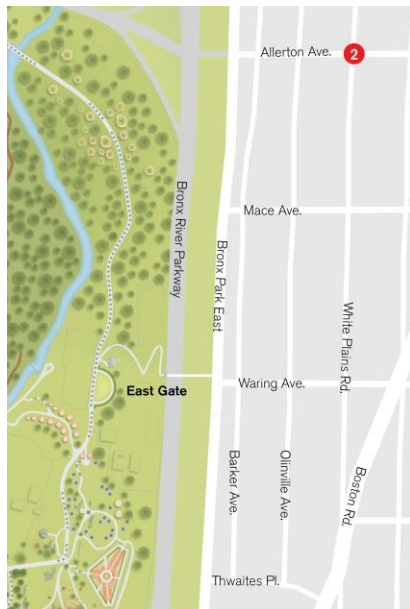


NYBG

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New York City and Bronx Officials and New York Botanical Garden Leaders Mark Reopening of NYBG's East Gate, Now Redesigned for Enhanced Community Access

Pedestrian Gate Provides Convenient Daytime Entrance for Neighborhoods East of NYBG



Ribbon-cutting for NYBG's redesigned East Gate entrance (left to right): NYC Department of Cultural Affairs Capital Project Manager David Bryant, Community Board 11 Parks Committee Chair Arlene Drayton, NYBG Board Member Joseph A. Thompson, NYC Council Member Ritchie Torres, NYBG CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President Gregory Long, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Regional Grants Officer Merrill Hesch, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation Bronx Borough Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, and Empire State Development Deputy Director Andrew Fletcher. (NYBG Photo)

Bronx, NY—Following a yearlong project to enhance community access to The New York Botanical Garden, New York City and Bronx officials and Botanical Garden leaders held a ribbon-cutting ceremony today to mark the official reopening of the Garden's East Gate. This pedestrian gate is a convenient entrance for residents of neighborhoods east of the Garden as well as visitors who come from other areas of the city by the number 2 subway line.

The East Gate area has been redesigned to eliminate a steep path and now features a gently sloping, wheelchair-accessible walkway with new landscaping and a pedestrian bridge leading to the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden. From there, visitors can reach other areas of the Garden on foot or via the Garden's popular tram, which is included with an *All-Garden Pass*.

The East Gate is reached by a pedestrian path that begins at Waring Avenue and Bronx Park East, leading to a bridge over the Bronx River Parkway. For riders of the number 2 subway, the gate is five blocks from the Allerton Avenue stop. The gate will be open during the Garden's normal daytime hours (10 a.m.–6 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and Monday federal holidays; 10 a.m.–5 p.m. mid-January–mid-February). Grounds-only admission is free on Wednesdays. The gate will open at 9 a.m. on Saturdays, when grounds admission is free until 10 a.m. It is important to note that the East Gate will not be open for the Garden's evening events. Evening visitors should use the Garden's Conservatory or Mosholu gates.

The project was supported by a mix of private and public funding. The Office of the Mayor of New York City, the Bronx Borough President, and the City Council provided \$2.2 million in city capital funding. Governor Andrew Cuomo and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Empire State Development provided \$600,000 in state funding, and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency provided a grant of \$485,000.

“We are deeply grateful to the city, state, and federal officials and agencies whose funding made it possible for us to provide our neighbors on the east side of the Garden with a truly accessible and inviting way to enter our historic landscape,” said Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President Gregory Long. “The reopening of the East Gate is an essential element of the Garden's commitment to being an anchor institution in our Bronx community where local residents can enjoy our green urban oasis and learn about the indispensable role that plants play in all of our lives.”

Also representing The New York Botanical Garden was Board of Trustees Member Joseph A. Thompson.

New York City and Bronx officials who participated in the ribbon-cutting were New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Bronx Borough Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Capital Project Manager David Bryant, and Community Board 11 Parks Committee Chair Arlene Drayton.

“As the Councilman representing residents east of The New York Botanical Garden including the Allerton, Olinville, and Van Nest sections of the Bronx, I know full well the value of providing the local community with direct access to an iconic cultural institution such as the Botanical Garden,” Council Member Ritchie Torres said. “The reopening of the East Gate and its new ADA-accessible amenities are key to providing year-round accessibility to all residents, and I commend The New York Botanical Garden for making this project a priority.”

“The New York Botanical Garden is world-renowned for the remarkable beauty of its living collections and for its cutting-edge scientific research, but it's also deeply rooted in the

neighborhoods it calls home,” said New York City Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. “Thanks to this project improving access at NYBG’s East Gate, a vital link to the surrounding community is not only restored but enhanced. The East Gate will now give residents and visitors—especially those with disabilities—greater access to the enrichment, education, and connection to the natural wonders that this vital institution provides.”

“Any effort to curb many of the negative health outcomes facing our borough would not be possible without an opportunity for community residents to have access to green space and healthy educational programs right in their own backyard,” said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. “Providing direct access to The New York Botanical Garden for Bronxites east of the Garden is another positive step in this effort, especially in light of our ongoing #Not62 campaign, and I thank The New York Botanical Garden for making this vision of a more visitor-friendly East Gate a reality.”

New York State officials who participated were Andrew Fletcher, Deputy Director, Empire State Development; Alexia Nazarian, Program Manager, Empire State Development; and Merrill Hesch, Regional Grants Officer, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

“New York has one of the most scenic and historically significant parks systems in the country and community partners such as The New York Botanical Garden provide another venue for New Yorkers to enjoy green recreational opportunities right in their own neighborhoods,” said Rose Harvey, Commissioner, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. “The reopening and redesign of the East Gate is another example of how the Botanical Garden continues to make its 250-acre oasis easily accessible for all New Yorkers to enjoy.”

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad, bus, or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Everett Children’s Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit nybg.org

The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden’s general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

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