
City of Norwalk

Veteran's Park Coastal Resilience and Living Shoreline Feasibility Study

Norwalk, Connecticut



A project initiated by a local aquarium develops living shoreline strategies that bolster climate resiliency, improve ecological function, and enhance access within a public park.

SERVICES

Climate Adaptation & Resilience
Conservation Planning
Ecological Restoration
Nature Based Solutions

Sea level rise and other climate-related impacts had caused severe erosion and damage along the southern boundary of Veteran's Memorial Park, a popular recreation destination. Many park paths had become degraded and inaccessible. In 2022, the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk (TMA) received a Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant to analyze the 35-acre site and determine the feasibility of restoring a living shoreline along the park's harbor-facing edge.

Biohabitats researched and analyzed existing data, including drainage infrastructure, habitats, topography and bathymetry, hydrodynamic conditions, and historic shoreline extents. The data was compiled to develop a base map utilized during field investigations to delineate ecological communities, develop biological benchmarks, ground truth elevation and infrastructure data, and survey benthic communities. Desktop and field data were used to identify and evaluate options for a living shoreline to enhance native habitat—including intertidal mudflat, salt marsh, coastal scrub-shrub, and upland forest and meadow—while reducing flood risk and improving ecological function. The designs considered a range of options, including extending salt marsh into the harbor, promoting marsh migration into the park, and encouraging public engagement with boardwalks.

Each design alternative presented to TMA and the City included a detailed description of restoration methods, estimated costs, and any potential risks. The strategies met TMA's goals and set the stage for the creation of a resilient living shoreline that also improves public access to a diverse, thriving urban tidal marsh.