The Trust for Public Land - CT

Yellow Mill Channel Green Infrastructure

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Armed with a "toolkit" of appropriate nature-based solutions that address environmental degradation and injustice, the City of Bridgeport is poised to enhance quality of life and climate resilience along a portion of its waterfront.

SERVICES

Climate Adaptation & Resilience
Ecological Restoration
Nature Based Solutions

The City of Bridgeport, located at the mouth of the Pequonnock River on the Long Island Sound, has more waterfront than any other municipality in Connecticut, but 70% of it is inaccessible to the public. Bridgeport citizens, 48% of whom are low income, are vulnerable to water quality issues stemming from the City's industrial legacy, aging infrastructure, growing threats of sea level rise, and increasingly frequent and severe storms.

To improve access to the health and resilience-enhancing benefits of parks and green spaces, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the City envisioned a 19-mile waterfront trail traversing nine neighborhoods. The banks of the Yellow Mill Channel, identified as a priority for smart development in the City's Waterfront Master Plan, sits along the envisioned trail. While the water quality is poor due to combined sewer overflows, stormwater runoff, and flooding, the area hosts valuable coastal habitat for fish and shorebirds.

Working closely with TPL, Biohabitats conducted a study to identify, evaluate, and recommend opportunities to utilize green infrastructure to simultaneously soften and enhance public access to the water's edge; increase climate resilience, habitat, and water quality; protect and improve existing infrastructure; reduce flood risk; and create recreational and educational opportunities along nearly 6,000 feet of channel shoreline. Biohabitats then created a toolkit of nature-based approaches to inform community decision-making. The toolkit included descriptions of siting criteria, design elements, benefits and feasibility considerations, estimated cost ranges, and recommended site locations and typologies.