

Boroughs Have Accessible Parks

Compiled by Jane Lake

Park visitors can catch the last days of summer at area parks as leaves on the trees turn while bypassing steep hills, stairs and cobblestone with top recommendations, based on mobility and access, from Accessibility Coordinator for New York City Parks Christopher Noel.

In Manhattan

Cool off with minimal fuss in Battery Park. A Noel pick, “The SeaGlass Carousel is fully accessible with accessible seating,” he said. “It’s a location where there are all kinds of activities going on. It’s fun. Take a nice fall day to take a nice long walk in the park.”

Noel also recommends the High Line, which starts in downtown Manhattan in the meatpacking district. Elevators or ramp access are at Gansevoort, 14th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, 34th Sts. and 12th Aves. See thehighline.org/visit for entry and exit points.

Madison Square Park and Union Square Park are smack in the hub of activity and plenty of eateries. Live performances are scheduled most weekends. Both sites have accessible bathrooms and are directly on MTA bus and subway routes.

In Queens

Smaller than Manhattan or Brooklyn, 39-acre Queens



SeaGlass Carousel

Botanical Garden is definitely worth a visit. Adjacent to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, it’s less crowded than the bigger gardens yet offers the same varied collection of trees and flowers.

“I suggest the botanical gardens in all of our boroughs,” said Noel.

In Brooklyn

A recreational oasis, Brooklyn has a multitude of park spaces to relax with maximum independence.

Flip the script and see Lower Manhattan’s skyline from DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass). “I’d say Brooklyn Bridge Park

is definitely one to highlight. Bathrooms and pathways are fully accessible,” said Noel.

Brooklyn’s masterpiece is Prospect Park with a 55-acre lake, the rolling hills of the Long Meadow and other landmarks in between. In addition there is Samuel J. and Ethel LeFrak Center at Lakeside which has a large rink for roller-skaters in the spring and summer months while open to ice skaters and ice-sledders in the fall and winter. It’s accessible year-round.

The 585-acre oasis designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead and architect, Calvert Vaux remains

a beautiful respite from the bustle of city life.

In The Bronx

Crotona Park and the vast Pelham Bay Park host naturalist and wildlife activities led by Urban Park Rangers. “We do a lot of nature tours, and they are all on accessible pathways. We have accessible barbeque areas and pools in both. And ADA bathrooms,” said Noel.

In Staten Island

Time-travel to the 19th Century at Sailor’s Snug Harbor. Staten Island’s “crown jewel” the National Historic Landmark district includes 26 Greek Revival, Beaux Arts, Italianate and Victorian style buildings according to Noel. Clove Lakes Park and Wolfe’s Pond are also top choices for wildlife, recreation and access.”

Finally, Austin J. McDonald Playground is an all-ages choice. “We designed the park so seniors could go to a place to easily hang out with their grandkids or what have you. It’s an accessible environment which ultimately compliments the fully accessible playground inside of it,” said Noel.

“Many of our smaller local parks have wonderful playgrounds and other areas with lots of accessible features, Noel said. “Some of our most recently updated are the “Community Parks Initiative” Parks. These typically have many great accessible features and can be found on our website at nyc.gov/parks.”



The High Line