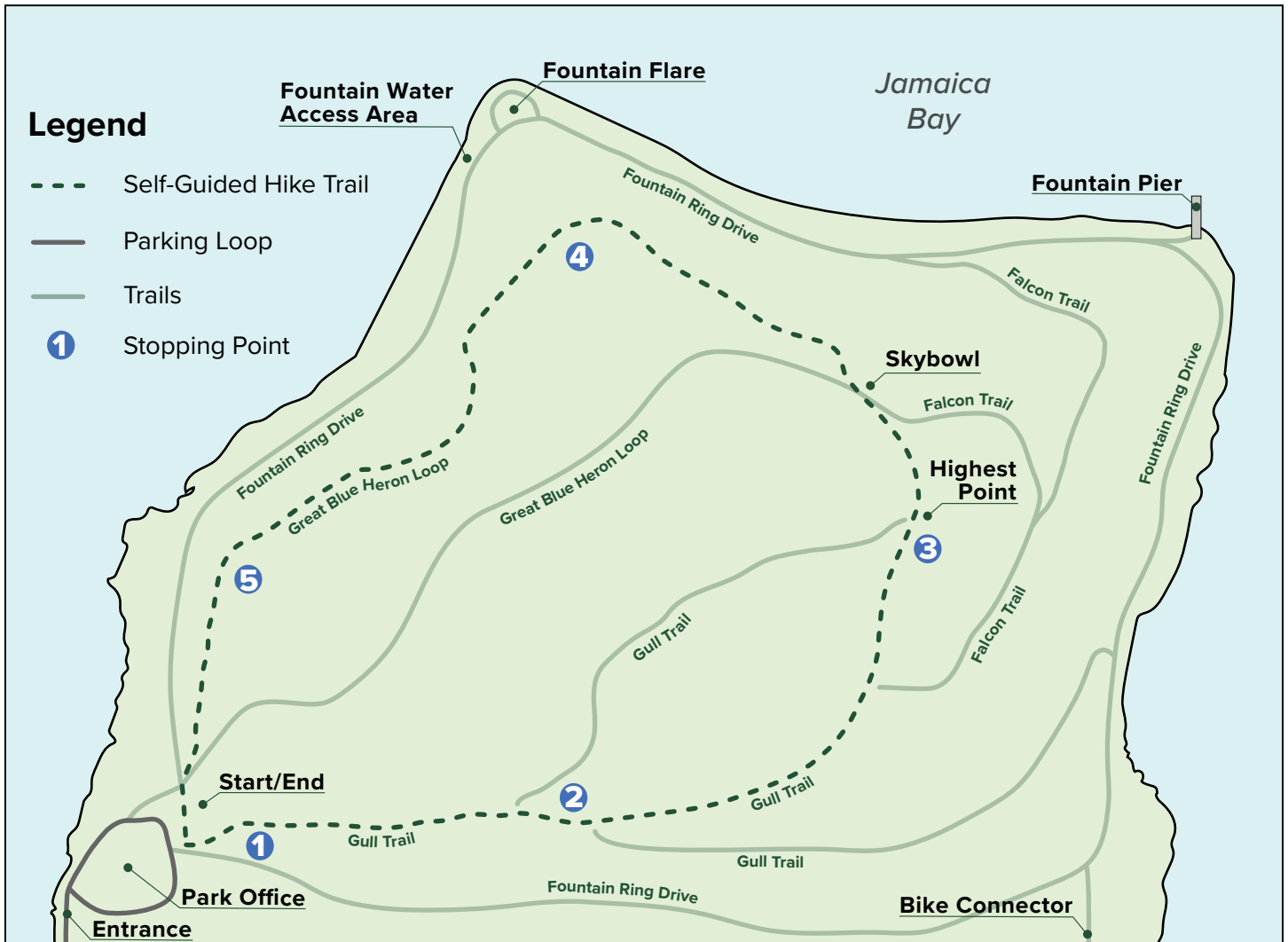


Shirley Chisholm State Park

Fountain Self-Guided Hike

For this self-guided hike around the Fountain side of the park, follow the prompts on the back of this page along the way. Stop at each point and read the information with the corresponding number to learn a little bit about what you are looking at. We encourage you to take this at your own pace, and have fun!

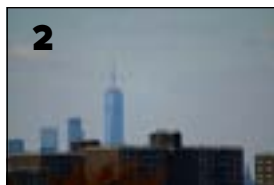
(Total Distance: Approximately 1.6 miles along gravel trails with mild-moderate inclines).



Use the photos below as a reference to discover the skyline! *(Part of stopping point 3).*



Empire State Building



One World Trade Center



John F. Kennedy International Airport



Marine Parkway Bridge



Verrazzano Bridge



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Kathy Hochul
Governor

Leslie Wright
NYC Regional Director

Randy Simons
Interim Commissioner

1 Look for the orange container with a large image of a bike on it: this is the Shirley Chisholm State Park Fountain Bike Library! The Bike Library offers free bike loans and learn-to-ride classes every May – October, just one of the many free passive recreation opportunities available for park visitors. This landfill-turned-park owes a large part of its existence to the many persistent and hopeful members of the surrounding community, particularly the Friends of Penn and Fountain Avenue Landfills community group. This group advocated for the transformation of the landfill to a park for community members to enjoy nature. Without them and the group’s prominent leader, Lee Shelley, Shirley Chisholm State Park would not be the park you see today.

2 Take a seat on one of the benches and look out at the meadow around you. Shirley Chisholm State Park was intentionally planted as a native grassland, using over a hundred species of native grasses, sedges, trees, and wildflowers. These grasslands provide a lifeline to the many different animals that can be found here. Depending on the season and time of day, this park is home to mammals like rabbits, raccoons, possums, and muskrats. Many different species of birds like red-winged black birds, northern harrier hawks, oystercatchers and other shorebirds. There are even snakes, and countless insects too! This habitat provides essential food and shelter for all the animals listed, plus many more.

3 You are now at the highest point in not just the park, but Jamaica Bay! You are standing roughly 137 feet above sea level, on one of the highest points in South Brooklyn. Look towards the buildings in the distance, visible on the horizon is the Midtown Manhattan skyline. Of the many clustered buildings, one of the most prominent is the **(1)** Empire State Building, about 9 miles away. Right below you, in front of the Manhattan skyline, is Spring Creek Towers, once known as - and still commonly referred to as - Starrett City. This Mitchell-Llama development houses around 15,000 residents in over 46 buildings. Hidden behind this development is the Downtown Manhattan skyline, but you can still see the top of the **(2)** One World Trade Center. Pivot to the right and you can spot most of Queens, and further towards the shoreline is **(3)** JFK Int. Airport in Jamaica, Queens. Turning 180° from the Manhattan skyline, you can see Jamaica Bay and its marsh islands with the Rockaways in the distance. Continue following the horizon to the right and you can see the **(5)** Verrazano Bridge. At this point, you should

have made it back to your starting point. All in all, on a clear day you can see 4 out of the 5 boroughs! Take a moment to take in this amazing 360° view.

4 Stop along this curve and find what looks to be a large, metal chimney. Listen closely and you may be able to hear light humming, or maybe you can see heat rising from the top? We call this structure the Fountain flare. This park is built on top of a former landfill, and this is one of the hints to its past. When trash decomposes in a covered landfill, oxygen cannot aid in decomposition, the waste produces a mixture of gasses, mostly methane. This greenhouse gas is 28x (epa.org) more powerful than carbon dioxide! Under the ground, there is a system of pipes that carries these gasses to the flare in front of you, where the landfill gas is burned off into carbon dioxide and water vapor. The landfill is managed by the New York Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), ensuring that everything is operating smoothly and that all people, animals, and plants in and around the park stay safe.

5 Take a rest on a bench and look out into Old Mill Creek, then over into Jamaica Bay, the Rockaways, down the shoreline, down into the water. What do you notice? Do you see birds? Sand? Grass? All these things are important components of an estuary. An estuary is a semi-protected coastal water body where fresh water and salt water meet. This environment provides a safe and nutrient-rich habitat that many species of wildlife thrive in. The estuary here at Shirley Chisholm State Park, particularly this far up in the creek, is especially important to fish. Many fish spend their juvenile stages of life far up in these creeks where there are more grasses to hide in and fewer large predators. In turn, this makes it a great place for shore birds, such as egrets and herons, to hang out on the shoreline and eat these small fish as they swim by in groups. New York City’s estuary is home to hundreds of species of fish, crustaceans, shore and water birds!

6 Congratulations! You’ve just completed the Shirley Chisholm State Park Fountain Self-Guided Hike. Take in the nature around you and reflect on what you’ve just read and seen. Don’t forget to tag us on Instagram and let us know you completed our Self-Guided Hike with a picture from your adventures!

 @ShirleyChisholmStatePark

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM
STATE PARK



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation