

City Cuts Ribbon on \$3.3 Million Renovation of Grassmere “Green” Playground in Queens



Five New Community Parks Initiative Sites Opened on First Day of Spring

\$24 Million in Total Renovations Opened Across City; Green Playgrounds will Absorb Stormwater and Improve Health of Local Waterways

Photos are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Vincent Sapienza on Tuesday joined with NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Council Member Donovan Richards, and students from Wave Prep Elementary School to open Grassmere Playground in Far Rockaway. The park, part of NYC Park's \$318-million Community Parks Initiative (CPI), was one of five renovated CPI sites opened across the city on the first day of Spring.

To manage stormwater runoff, green infrastructure has been added throughout Grassmere Playground. Green features typically include rain gardens, underground storm chambers and permeable concrete and flood-tolerant plants that capture tens of thousands of gallons of stormwater each year. DEP has committed more than \$50 million in funding for green infrastructure installations at CPI sites throughout the city, helping to reduce sewer overflows that sometimes occur during heavy rainfall, improve air quality and lower summertime temperatures.

"In 2014 we launched the Community Parks Initiative with a commitment to bring world-class neighborhood parks to all New Yorkers. Today, we're seeing the results of that promise," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "The five completely rebuilt parks we opened today illustrate the breadth and impact of CPI, which has already impacted more than one million children through physical park improvements, expanded programming, and enhanced community partnerships."

"DEP is proud to be a partner in NYC Parks' Community Parks Initiative, which is transforming neighborhood parks across the city," said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "By installing green infrastructure in these rebuilt playgrounds we are helping to reduce stormwater runoff and improve the health of local waterways including Jamaica Bay, Newtown Creek and the Bronx River."

"The Community Parks Initiative is about creating a fairer and more accessible park system for ALL New Yorkers—and there's no better expression of that than opening fully renovated parks across the city in a single day," said **Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver**. "The community of Far Rockaway now has an updated high-quality play space to enjoy, complete with a new track, soccer field and even an outdoor classroom."

"There is no better justification for the Community Parks Initiative than the opening of Grassmere Playground in Far Rockaway," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. "This beachfront community has been severely underserved by green space for decades, forcing seniors and children to travel dozens of blocks to find a beautiful and safe open space. This brand new park will surely bring many educational and entertainment opportunities for families and schools throughout the peninsula. I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Silver for their commitment to providing green space to underserved communities that have deserved better for far too long."

The \$3.3 million renovation to Grassmere Playground included two new play areas (for kids aged 2–5, and 5–12), a 100-meter track and junior soccer field, an educational wooded trail, an outdoor classroom, a junior basketball court, adult fitness equipment, a children's water play area, and improved planting, seating and lighting. New green infrastructure elements at the site, including a storm chamber that will contribute to a reduction of stormwater runoff of nearly 52,000 gallons each time it rains, were developed and funded with \$427,000 from DEP. The reconstruction also included Parks Without Borders design elements to enhance edges and entrances.

The Ribbon-Cutting Relay Day, which featured Parks Commissioner Silver cutting the ribbon on a CPI park in every borough, began at Arrochar Playground in Staten Island. DEP funded the installation of a rain garden, subsurface water storage, planting beds, and synthetic turf field that will contribute to a reduction of runoff by 30,000 gallons per rain event.

After Commissioners Sapienza and Silver stopped at Grassmere Playground in Far Rockaway, Queens, the next park opened was Hilltop Playground (formerly Saratoga Ballfields) in Brooklyn. DEP funds went toward the installation of green infrastructure elements including a rain garden and a storm chamber that can detain a combined 26,000 gallons of water each time it rains.

The festivities then moved up north to Lyons Square Playground in the South Bronx. There, DEP funded the installation of rain gardens, permeable pavement, and a storm chamber that will capture 25,000 gallons of stormwater per rainstorm.

Finally, the relay concluded at Martin Luther King, Jr. Playground in Harlem where Commissioners Sapienza and Silver were joined by Mayor De Blasio for the day's last ribbon-cutting ceremony. The upgraded playground includes a new rain garden, permeable pavement, and storm chamber, all funded by DEP, that will reduce runoff by nearly 32,000 gallons each rain event.

CPI was initially launched in 2014, and is funded through 2019 with \$318 million in capital dollars funding renovations of more than 60 community parks that have not undergone significant improvements in decades. All of the parks and playgrounds that will receive improvements are in dense, fast-growing neighborhoods with an above-average percentage of residents living below the poverty level.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$18.9 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).