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Community Parks Initiative “Green” Playground Will Help to Improve Health of East River



Sol Lain Playground on the Lower East Side, Reopens After \$3.6 Million Upgrade

Addition of Green Infrastructure Will Capture Stormwater and Help to Clean up the East River

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

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) joined NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Borough President Gale Brewer, Council Member Margaret Chin, fifth graders from P.S. 134 and community members to cut the ribbon on one of the first neighborhood playgrounds in Manhattan to be fully reconstructed under the [Community Parks Initiative \(CPI\)](#). The improvements to Sol Lain Playground were funded by a \$3.6 million allocation through Mayor de Blasio’s Community Parks Initiative, NYC Parks’ Parks Without Borders program, and DEP for green infrastructure improvements to absorb stormwater and improve the health of the East River.

Improvements to the playground include a new high-school size basketball court, multi-purpose play area, drinking fountains and high-efficiency spray shower. A children’s education garden with accessible planters, water supply, compost bin, and a small cherry orchard was also constructed adjacent to P.S. 134. As with many other CPI sites, DEP coordinated the installation of new green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff from the playground and the surrounding streets. This work included the construction of a storm chamber, permeable pavements and planting beds with shrubs, small trees and perennials that are able to capture

More Information

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up to 45,000 gallons of stormwater with each rainfall. A storm chamber is an underground stormwater retention system that manages and controls the volume and discharge timing of stormwater runoff. In addition to detaining stormwater, storm chambers also recharge the ground water, maintain base flow and improve water quality while also providing natural filtration.

“The Community Parks Initiative serves as a model for how City agencies can partner to help ensure that New Yorkers get the biggest bang for their buck,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “DEP is funding the construction of green infrastructure within each park, which will help to improve the health of local waterways, such as the East River, and provide important amenities to communities that need them the most.”

“NYC Parks works hard to provide New Yorkers a fair and balanced park system and every time we cut a ribbon to open a reconstructed playground like Sol Lain, we come a little bit closer to fulfilling that mission,” said **Commissioner Silver**.

“Parks and green spaces play critical roles in our wellbeing and thanks to ongoing Mayoral support through the Community Parks Initiative, we are able to bring major improvements to parks city-wide that have not received investment in decades.”

Almost all CPI sites are now in active construction and many of the first set of CPI sites are beginning to open this summer. CPI was initially launched in 2014, and is funded through 2019 with \$318 million in capital dollars funding renovations of more than 67 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.

Capital program support for every CPI site comes from DEP, which has committed more than \$36 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations. The green infrastructure will manage the precipitation that falls on the parks, and some of the surrounding streets, keeping it out of the combined sewer system and helping to reduce combined sewer overflows that sometimes occur during heavy rainfall. New York City has the most ambitious and aggressive green infrastructure program in the nation, with thousands of installations currently under construction across the city. In addition to managing stormwater, green infrastructure helps to improve air quality while also providing shade and lowering summertime temperatures.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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 \$20.7 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](#).

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