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Completion of \$42 Million Sewer Upgrade in Brooklyn and Queens Keeps Trash and Debris out of Newtown Creek



Similar Litter Capture Technology already Benefitting the Bronx River and Gowanus Canal

Construction Photos and a Map are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Vincent Sapienza today announced the completion of a \$42 million project to build four subsurface litter capture devices that will improve the health and aesthetics of Newtown Creek. The in-sewer control devices include fixed baffles and bending weirs to capture floating litter and direct it to a wastewater treatment plant where it can be removed and sent to landfill. DEP has installed similar facilities along the Bronx River and the Gowanus Canal over the last several years and they have captured more than 500 tons of litter and debris.

Much of the trash and debris found in New York Harbor, and its connected waterways, originates as litter discarded on city streets that subsequently gets washed into catch basins and eventually makes its way into the sewer system. To help keep litter from reaching Newtown Creek, in late 2015 DEP began the installation of the below-ground capture devices at four key locations within the sewer system that can discharge to the Creek or its tributaries.

"Cleaning up Newtown Creek is one of our top priorities and this \$42 million investment will help to capture trash and debris and ensure that it does not foul the waterway," said **DEP Commissioner Sapienza**. "As we continue to work to raise public awareness of the problems associated with litter, we look forward to partnering with elected officials, environmental groups and residents on many other projects that will further improve the health of Newtown Creek."

More Information

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“I commend DEP for its leadership on installing litter capture infrastructure that will ensure floating debris and trash are properly removed from Newtown Creek. The residents of East Williamsburg and Greenpoint have experienced decades of environmental neglect, making this a much-welcomed solution to an endemic problem,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. “Protecting the environmental integrity of Newtown Creek is critical to ensuring Brooklyn’s waterways and ecosystem are beautified for future generations to come.”

“Improving Newtown Creek will help produce a cleaner and more sustainable city for the next generation,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “This upgrade to protect one of our city’s most polluted waterways is an investment in our future and a commitment to solving our city’s pressing environmental concerns.”

“I am proud to have worked at the federal level to secure a Superfund designation for Newtown Creek, helping to harness federal resources for the Creek’s remediation. I applaud the New York City Department of Environmental Protection on achieving this milestone to keep debris out of Newtown Creek,” said **Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY)**. “I look forward to continued cooperation across levels of government to clean up the Creek, keep our communities healthy and our streets free from wastewater and debris.”

“I am pleased to see that these four litter capture devices are now up and running at Newtown Creek,” said **State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** “This \$42 million investment will help keep garbage and debris out of Newtown Creek, while protecting our environment by diverting the captured litter to a wastewater treatment plant. As a member of the NYS Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, I am thrilled to see Newtown Creek’s condition improve even further thanks to efforts such as this by the Department of Environmental Protection.”

“A lot of time, money and emotions have gone into reclaiming Newtown Creek from a century of neglect. We now have to make certain those efforts were not wasted. Every step toward keeping it clean will do that. Debris capture is a smart investment and its impact is clear to our waterways,” said **State Senator Martin Malavé Dilan**.

“The environmental safety of New Yorkers is one of my top priorities. We must ensure that the air, water, and ground are clean, and the installation of these new devices will improve all of these. Thanks to Commissioner Sapienza for improving the quality of life for New Yorkers,” said **Assembly Member Joseph R. Lentol**.

“This is an important initiative that is long overdue,” said **Assembly Member Catherine Nolan**. “I appreciate the protection it will give our local communities in the long running struggle to clean up Newtown Creek.”

“I am proud to see the completion of this important upgrade project that will keep Newtown Creek healthy and improve our city’s sewer system,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council’s Environmental Protection Committee**. “The litter capture devices will prevent litter from reaching our waterways, one of our city’s greatest resources. Thank you to DEP Commissioner Sapienza for his leadership on this investment.”

“I applaud DEP for taking this critical step to aid in the cleanup of Newtown Creek. We must continue investing in the creek to ensure that we realize the full potential of this important community resource,” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso**.

“Any effort that helps to prevent the pollution of local waterways, like what we saw at Newtown Creek, is a welcome one in my book. I am glad to see that the Department of Environmental Protection is taking steps to rid our waters of litter through the use of catch basins and capture devices,” said **Council Member Robert Holden**.

“Marine debris and plastic pollution is a longstanding problem within Newtown Creek and we applaud this over-due investment by DEP to keep trash out of the waterway,” said **Willis Elkins, Program Manager for the Newtown Creek Alliance**. “We look forward to working with the City to monitor the impact of the

upgrade and to push for similar improvements on other sewer and stormwater outfalls throughout the Creek."

The litter capture devices were constructed at the following locations:

- **47th Avenue between 28th and 29th Streets**
- **Rust Street and 56th Drive**
- **Troutman Street and Saint Nicholas Avenue**
- **455 Johnson Avenue**

In addition to the litter capture devices, the city's 144,000 catch basins [are designed](#) to trap litter before it can make its way into the sewer lines. DEP also operates skimmer boats that patrol New York harbor to capture floating debris, including wood, plastic, metal, rubber, and glass.

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](#).

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