

Mayor Adams Opens Rooftop Farm on Staten Island to Grow Organic Produce, Absorb Stormwater to Reduce Neighborhood Flooding

April 19, 2022

\$670,000 Project Funded Through City's Green Infrastructure Grant Program

32,000-Square-Foot Green Roof Captures Approximately 3.5 Million Gallons of Stormwater in Typical Year

Rooftop Farm Improves Air Quality, Promotes Biodiversity, Reduces Carbon Footprint of Building

Video available at: <https://youtu.be/hKxfqRp3lGg>

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Rohit T. Aggarwala today opened a new rooftop farm on Staten Island that grows healthy organic food and absorbs stormwater, in an effort to help reduce neighborhood flooding and protect the health of New York Harbor. The approximately 32,000-square-foot roof is planted with perennial wildflowers and organic vegetables to absorb the approximately 3.5 million gallons of rain that falls on it in a typical year, instead of onto an impermeable roof. By keeping rainfall out of the local drainage system, this rooftop farm — situated on top of the Nicotra Group's Corporate Commons Three building — helps manage stormwater and decrease neighborhood flooding. The project was made possible by a \$670,000 grant provided through DEP's [Green Infrastructure Grant Program](#).

“Too often, we ignore the role that food plays in the destruction of our environment. But shifting to more sustainable, plant-based diets and growing fresh vegetables that are accessible to every community is key to building a city that supports both human and planetary health,” said **Mayor Adams**. “Our investment in this rooftop farm embodies the future of sustainable agriculture and resiliency by serving those in the neighborhood, and by absorbing stormwater and protecting New York Harbor, and it will deliver a healthier and more resilient future for generations to come.”

“Living and working in the city lovingly nicknamed the ‘Concrete Jungle,’ I am pleased to see exciting green infrastructure that can change the landscape of New York,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “Rooftop farms like this new one on Staten Island is only just the beginning, as we look to bring more innovative, resilient ideas to fruition in our city’s infrastructure.”

“DEP’s Green Infrastructure Grant program encourages property owners to do their part to manage stormwater, reduce neighborhood flooding, and improve the health of our waterways,” said **DEP Commissioner Aggarwala**. “This project is a wonderful example of a partnership between government and a strong community leader to build green infrastructure that enhances the sustainability of the property while also helping to protect our shared environment.”

“Green rooftops are a go-to tool to increase resiliency in flood-prone neighborhoods, and they are going to be critical part of the future of our built environment,” said **New York City Department of Buildings Acting Commissioner Constadino ‘Gus’ Sirakis, P.E.** “Thanks to DEP’s forward-thinking Green Infrastructure Grant program, as well as the sustainable roof requirements in our codes and enhanced Green Roof Property Tax Abatements, New York City is building a living, breathing, sustainable skyline, one rooftop at a time.”

“The produce and herbs from the Nicotra Grown Organic Rooftop Farm will be featured on our tables to serve New Yorkers, including at our two social enterprise eateries, COMMONS café and Pienza Brick Oven Pizza Café, where we donate 100 percent of our profits to charities and scholarships,” said **Lois Nicotra, philanthropist and co-founder, The Nicotra Group**. “When you eat a salad at the cafés, your meal is on a mission to help our community in so many ways, and the salad’s greens and tomatoes are fresh picked that morning.”

“The Nicotra Grown Organic Rooftop Farm is another way we show our commitment to sustainability and our love for Staten Island,” said **Richard Nicotra, philanthropist and co-founder, The Nicotra Group**. “This green rooftop farm is a model for using space that’s often overlooked, feeding communities fresh and local food, and building a more resilient New York City.”

The Corporate Commons Three farm includes 23,375 square feet of green roof and 9,500 square feet of vegetated walkway and was designed by the Brooklyn Grange. DEP’s grant award of \$669,584 paid for the rooftop farm.

In total, DEP has committed over \$14 million through its grant program to over 34 partners — including the Nicotra Group — that have contributed an additional \$7.5 million in matching funds. Not-for-profit organizations, private property owners, and businesses are eligible for funding for retrofitting rooftops with green roofs to manage stormwater on private property. DEP accepts applications on a rolling, year-round basis, and consideration is given to projects that are cost effective, replicable, and provide matching funds or other contributions. To learn more and apply, New Yorkers can visit [DEP’s Green Infrastructure Grant page](#).

“I applaud the DEP and Mayor Adams for supporting this project,” said **New York City Councilmember David Carr**. “This is a great use of urban agriculture and an appropriate approach to help reduce area flooding.”

“I would like to congratulate Mayor Adams and DEP on the opening of the Corporate Commons Three farm,” said **New York City Councilmember Amanda Farías**. “This rooftop farm will be an asset to the local community on Staten Island by providing fresh food, green infrastructure, and storm mitigation. I am extremely encouraged by this project and look forward to seeing similar investments in all five boroughs, especially the Bronx. Waterfront communities, like the ones I represent, need innovative solutions to deal with resiliency issues that have only gotten worse as we grapple with the impacts of climate change. I commend DEP for investing in nonprofits, businesses, and entrepreneurs who are rising to the challenge in order to benefit our communities and move our city forward.”

“This is an incredible opportunity to bring organic, locally grown food into the Staten Island community, all while assisting our borough with flood prevention, which is a constant battle for our residents and business owners,” said **New York City**

Councilmember Kamillah Hanks. “It is my hope for even more local not-for-profit organizations, property owners, and businesses to take advantage of this grant program, for the sake of both our immediate and future resiliency and sustainability efforts.”

“As the former chair of Manhattan Community Board 1, we were instrumental in advocating for building New York City’s first green school: P.S. 276,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin.** “I fully support expanding green infrastructure grant programs, which have proven to lower our carbon footprint. Creating this rooftop farm reminds us that we need to continue these initiatives for the future of New York City and its residents.”

“We’re absolutely thrilled to have partnered with the Nicotra Group and DEP on this innovative project,” said **Anastasia Cole Plakias, co-founder and chief impact officer, Brooklyn Grange.** “Every new building in New York City should have a green roof as beautiful and productive as this one. Not only is this roof providing much-needed environmental benefits and climate resiliency to our city, but it’s also a unique destination that supports economic opportunity and job creation on Staten Island.”

###