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The Trust for Public Land & New York City

Unveil State-of-the-art Green

Infrastructure Playground in Queens

Ridgewood asphalt lot transformed, will serve 500 Pre-K to 12th grade students and surrounding community

Green infrastructure will capture more than 375,000 gallons of stormwater a year and help improve the health of Newtown Creek

RIDGEWOOD, NY — The Trust for Public Land and New York City today unveiled a state-of-the art-playground on a formerly cracked asphalt lot at the Robert E. Peary School, PS 75Q, in the Ridgewood neighborhood of Queens. Designed with help from the school’s students and built in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protection and the School Construction Authority, the 1-acre playground will include green infrastructure components that will allow the space to capture more than 375,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year. PS 75Q is a District 75 School that serves special needs students. The playground will also operate as a public open space during weekends, holidays and school vacations.

“The children at PS 75Q lacked a real playground. Partnering with school officials and community residents, The Trust for Public Land conducted a participatory design process to engage students, parents, teachers, and neighborhood residents in designing playground improvements that would best address the needs and preferences of the school’s students and families,” said **Mary Alice Lee**, director of The Trust for Public Land’s New York City Playgrounds Program. “Each of The Trust for Public Land’s playgrounds is so special because they are designed by the users—the very students and neighbors who will be enjoying the park for years to come.”

“This new playground will provide students at P.S. 75 and the broader community with a new outdoor space to learn and play. We’re grateful to the Trust For Public Land and the Department of Environmental Protection for their partnership on this project, and look forward to continuing to work together to create more green spaces for students across the City,” said **DOE Chancellor Carmen Fariña**.

“PS 75Q’s new, green playground is both beautiful and safe, while also helping to reduce pollution in Newtown Creek,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Steven Lawitts**. “This environmentally friendly schoolyard will raise awareness among New York City’s youngest environmental stewards about the important connection between effective stormwater management and the health of our local waterways.”

New York City Council Member Antonio Reynoso said, “I am so pleased that I was able to help support the construction of this new playground for the children of PS 75Q and the Ridgewood community. It’s so unique not only because it

More Information

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provides a much-needed playground for the students and addresses the lack of green infrastructure in our community at the same time, but also because the students were able to have a direct role in the design. I want to thank the Trust for Public Land and all the City agencies that had a role in making this project happen, and I hope that we can collaborate on more projects like this in the future.”

Said **PS75Q Principal James Thorbs**: “By building this playground, The Trust for Public Land has changed children’s lives.”

The playground is being funded through an innovative public-private partnership, with a private donation from funders to The Trust for Public Land NYC Playgrounds program, and public funding from New York City Council Member Antonio Reynoso and the departments of Education and Environmental Protection and the School Construction Authority. The total cost of the playground is just over \$1 million, including \$795,000 for construction and \$333,000 for design, community engagement and environmental education.

Community participation is a cornerstone of The Trust for Public Land’s NYC Playgrounds Program, and students spent three months helping plan the new playground. The Trust for Public Land worked closely with students from PS 75Q to create a new schoolyard that features a large piece of play equipment, a turf field, a running track, an outdoor classroom, color seal art designed by the students, a stage, a garden, trees, a drinking fountain and seating.

Additionally, the playground includes green infrastructure elements, such as specialized plantings and shade trees, porous pavement and permeable pavers. Also included in the construction is a new synthetic turf field made of woven polyester filaments and featuring a broken stone storage layer and perforated distribution pipes to promote infiltration.

Such green infrastructure design elements are a hallmark of The Trust for Public Land’s playground work. These features reduce storm runoff that can flood streets and overwhelm sewer systems, allowing untreated water to end up in rivers and bays. Each playground absorbs hundreds of thousands of gallons of water annually and includes 20-30 new trees that bring shade and better air quality to their neighborhoods. In New York, the group is planning similar playgrounds in Flushing Bay, East River and Gowanus Canal watersheds.

Since 1996, The Trust for Public Land, working with the city, has helped transform more than 180 public schoolyards from asphalt lots to spaces which offer safe and durable play equipment, athletic facilities and gardens. The program has added more than 150 acres of additional playground space serving the nearly 3.3 million people who live within a half-mile of one of the sites. The need is critical in a city where 73 percent of low-income neighborhoods fail to meet the city’s standard of 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

The Trust for Public Land has partnered with the DOE and DEP to build six other green infrastructure playgrounds:

- PS 261K, Boerum Hill, Brooklyn
- JHS 218K, East New York, Brooklyn
- PS 65K, Cypress Hills, Brooklyn
- JHS 157Q, Rego Park, Queens
- JHS 162K, Bushwick, Brooklyn
- CS 300X Tremont, The Bronx

The Trust for Public Land has done similar projects in other cities, including Philadelphia, Newark and San Francisco.

Attendees at Tuesday’s ribbon-cutting ceremony included City Council Member Antonio Reynoso, NYC DEP Deputy Commissioner Eric Landau, The Trust for Public Land NYC Playgrounds Program Director Mary Alice Lee, PS 75Q

Principal James Thorbs, and the students themselves.

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit tpl.org.

About New York City DEP

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 \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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