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Department of Environmental Protection Joins NYC Parks to Reopen Astoria Heights Playground After \$8 Million Renovation



Green Infrastructure will Absorb Stormwater, Cleanup East River and Improve Air Quality

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, Council Member Costa Constantinides, and Community Board 1 District Manager Florence Koulouris, to cut the ribbon on the reconstruction of Astoria Heights Playground, including a full reconstruction of the comfort station. It is one of ten parks in Queens that is receiving an investment through the Community Parks Initiative, NYC Parks' plan for an equitable parks system. The project is funded with nearly \$8 million total, and was the first major renovation to Astoria Heights Playground in more than 20 years.

DEP has committed approximately \$50 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations at CPI sites citywide. 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 is proud to partner with NYC Parks through the Community Parks Initiative,

More Information

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which is transforming neighborhood parks in all five boroughs,” said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “We have committed more than \$50 million to this initiative to install new green infrastructure that will help to both capture stormwater and beautify communities.”

“Astoria Heights Playground, like all of the Community Parks Initiative sites, was long overdue for an update so we’re grateful to be able to give this space the attention it deserves,” said **Commissioner Silver**. “Thanks to an incredible investment of \$7.9 million, we’re here today opening a park for all generations to use and enjoy.”

“Thanks to the capital investment of public dollars, the children and families of Astoria can enjoy the long-anticipated upgrades to Astoria Heights Playground,” said **Borough President Katz**. “The new Playground is for the community, by the community, thanks to substantial input on the design from community members and students through the Community Parks Initiative. Special thanks to NYC Parks and Commissioner Silver and Commissioner Lewandowski for their dedication to Queens’ families.”

“Astoria Heights Park has been a haven in our community, which is why it was important that it endeavor as a 21st century open space,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides**. “I am proud to have allocated \$1.1 million to help Astoria Heights Park become on par with other City green spaces. This partnership with our Mayor and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz ensures that for generations to come, Astoria families can now enjoy its sports courts, play equipment, picnic tables, and spray shower without having to venture too far.”

Astoria Heights Playground now features new play equipment for kids up to age 15, and a spray shower area featuring ten in-ground spray jets and five upright spray features. A new athletic field for tennis or volleyball is surrounded by an expanded walking track, and complements the existing handball and basketball courts. New pathways within the park and an accessible ramp make the space easier to navigate.

The design for this project was based on feedback gathered directly from community members, as well as administration and students from I.S. 10, which shares the space. NYC Parks’ landscape architects also took into account data received from more than 100 residents who responded to surveys conducted by the Friends of Astoria Park.

The Community Parks Initiative (CPI), launched by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014, is NYC Parks’ first major step toward a more equitable park system. CPI is a multi-faceted investment in the smaller public parks that are located in New York City’s densely populated and growing neighborhoods where there are higher-than-average concentrations of poverty. CPI 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.

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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