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NYC Environmental Protection
**Sewer Upgrades
 Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay**



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\$33 Million Sewer Upgrade to Begin in the Spring and Substantially Reduce Pollution in Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay

Project Will Prevent 225 Million Gallons of Combined Sewer Overflow Annually

A Map of the Project Area is Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that work will commence this spring on a \$33 million sewer upgrade project that modeling shows will prevent 225 million gallons of pollution from

More Information

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being discharged into Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay each year. The subsurface work will take place at five key junction points within the sewer system, located between LaGuardia Airport and Horace Harding Expressway, and will raise and lengthen the weirs which direct the wastewater to the Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant. The work is anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2018 and DEP will work closely with elected officials and Community Boards to address any construction-related concerns. As presented to Community Board 4 during a November meeting, the work at 108th Street beneath the Long Island Expressway overpass will only take place during the overnight hours, all lanes of vehicular traffic will be open during the day. There will be no impact at any time to traffic on Horace Harding Expressway.

“To help cleanup Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay, and improve the quality of life for the residents of northern Queens, we will invest \$33 million to optimize the capacity of the existing sewer system and significantly reduce the overflow of pollution,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “We are also building hundreds of curbside gardens throughout the area to collect stormwater from the streets and further relieve pressure on the sewers. In combination, we expect these projects will significantly improve the health of our local waterways.”

“Investing in clean water infrastructure is vital to improving water quality and benefits the economy,” said **Basil Seggos, Acting Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**. “The Flushing Bay Sewer improvement project is another important step under DEC’s long-term agreement and Consent Order with New York City to reduce and mitigate sewage impacts throughout New York Harbor. DEC recognizes the wonderful recreational opportunities that Flushing Bay offers, and optimizing the City’s existing infrastructure is a cost-effective and smart initial investment in Flushing Bay Water Quality. DEC will continue to work with DEP to further improve water quality throughout New York Harbor.”

“Our waterways are a precious environmental resource,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “This innovative sewer upgrade project will greatly reduce the amount of wastewater flowing into Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay. The Department of Environmental Protection, ably led by Commissioner Emily Lloyd, deserves our thanks for undertaking this important project and for doing so in a way that will minimize the impact on vehicular traffic.”

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council Environmental Protection Committee, said, “This \$33 million upgrade project at Bowery Bay and Flushing Bay will prevent 225 million gallons of pollution from entering our city’s waterways. Combined with our Green Infrastructure Plan, which implements alternative green infrastructure to capture storm water before it enters sewers, this project will improve the health of northern Queens waterways. I commend DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd for her leadership on this important issue.”

“We are very pleased that DEP will be upgrading the sewer systems in East Elmhurst and Corona,” said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland**. “This will make a noticeable difference in the quality of life of homeowners and residents that have suffered from sewage backups in the past. I look forward to our community’s continued partnership with DEP and to the work ahead.”

Throughout the roughly 7,500 miles of sewers located under the streets of New York City are numerous regulators, or junction points, where wastewater is either directed to a wastewater treatment plant or sent directly to a nearby water body. During dry weather, all the wastewater produced in the city, about 1.3 billion gallons on average, gets cleaned at wastewater treatment plants. However, during heavy rain storms, the amount of stormwater entering the combined sewers can exceed the capacity of the system and, in order to avoid backups into homes and businesses, the excess flows over weirs in the regulators and gets diverted to a local water body. This project will upgrade five of the key regulators located within the roughly 15,000-acre Bowery Bay drainage area. The subsurface work will include relocating some utilities,

expanding two of the regulator chamber areas, raising and lengthening the weirs to direct more wastewater to the Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant and any necessary structural repairs. The project is one component of an agreement between DEP and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to improve harbor water quality throughout New York City.

The five regulators slated for upgrades are located at:

- LaGuardia Airport Maintenance Yard
- Ditmars Boulevard and 100th Street
- Ditmars Boulevard and 31st Drive
- Street and 43rd Avenue
- th Street and Horace Harding Expressway

DEP presented details of the project to Community Board 4 in November and a meeting with Community Board 3 is expected to take place in February. Due to heavy traffic volume, the work at 108th Street under the Long Island Expressway overpass will only take place during overnight hours and there will be no impact at any time to traffic on Horace Harding Expressway. From Monday to Friday the work will take place from 10pm to 6am, during which two of the six lanes of vehicular traffic will be closed. All lanes of traffic will be reopened at 6am. Weekend work, if required, will take place from 12am to 8am.

Over the last decade, DEP has invested more than \$10 billion in upgrades to wastewater treatment plants and related efforts to reduce Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) and the cleanliness and health of New York City harbor water continues to improve to levels not seen in more than a century. However, CSOs remain the city's primary harbor water quality challenge. To further reduce CSOs, the City launched the Green Infrastructure Plan, an alternative approach to improving water quality that combines traditional infrastructure upgrades, such as the Bowery Bay sewer upgrades, and the integration of green infrastructure to capture and retain stormwater runoff before it ever enters the sewer system. In the Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay area, DEP has roughly 500 specially designed curbside gardens, or bioswales, either under construction now or recently completed. The bioswales collect and absorb stormwater before it ever reaches the sewer system where it can contribute to CSOs. This work is primarily taking place in the neighborhoods of Corona, Elmhurst, Forest Hills, Rego Park and Middle Village.

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. 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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