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The Trust for Public Land and New York City Unveil First “Green” Playground in Manhattan

Asphalt Lot Transformed, Designed by PS 111 Students;
Photos Available on [DEP’s Flickr Page](#)

Green Infrastructure will Capture up to 700,000 Gallons of Stormwater a Year and Help to Reduce Pollution in the Hudson River

The Trust for Public Land and New York City today unveiled a state-of-the art-playground on a formerly cracked asphalt lot at PS111 in Manhattan’s Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood. Designed with help from the school’s students and built in partnership with New York City, the one-acre playground will include green infrastructure components that will allow the space to capture up to 700,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year and help to improve the health of the Hudson River.

"The Trust for Public Land has led efforts in New York City to transform underperforming, part-time schoolyards into full-time, multi-functional community playgrounds," said **Adrian Benepe, Senior Vice President and Director of City Park Development**. "This program, which also plays an important environmental role by capturing storm water runoff, has already spread its green tendrils to Newark and Philadelphia, and can be a model for playground creation in park-starved neighborhoods in cities across the country."

"We are pleased to be a part of this unique program that has brought a clean and safe playground to Hell’s Kitchen and P.S. 111, while also helping to reduce pollution in the Hudson River," said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. "These

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projects will also help to raise awareness amongst the next generation of New Yorkers about the connection between effective stormwater management and the health of our local waterways.”

"We support the work of The Trust for Public Land, because we believe in the importance of providing safe, beautiful outdoor spaces for children to play in and engage with nature," said **Rochard and Ronay Menschel of The Charina Endowment Fund**. "The playground at PS 111M is a stunning example of The Trust for Public Land's work in New York City, and we know that students and the community will benefit from its outdoor space."

The playground is being funded through an innovative public-private partnership, with private donations from The Charina Endowment Fund and The Sulzberger Foundation, and public funding from former New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and several City agencies – the departments of Education and Environmental Protection and the School Construction Authority.

Community participation is a cornerstone of The Trust for Public Lands's NYC Playgrounds Program, and students at PS111 (formally known as PS 111M The Adolph S. Ochs School) spent three months helping plan the new playground. The final product has a turf field, running track, basketball courts, outdoor ping pong tables, play equipment and safety mats, forest walk, outdoor classroom, rain garden, green roof gazebo, drinking fountain, benches and chess and checker tables. This is the 6th green infrastructure playground built by TPL in partnership with the City throughout the five boroughs.

Another hallmark of The Trust for Public Land's playground work is the focus on green infrastructure, which reduces storm runoff that can flood streets, and overwhelm sewer systems, allowing untreated water to end up in rivers and bays. Each playground absorbs at least half a million 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 near Jamaica Bay, Newtown Creek and the Gowanus Canal.

"We are pleased to partner with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Trust for Public Land to build this new playground for the students of PS111," said **Elizabeth Rose, Deputy Chancellor of the Department of Education's Division of Operations**. "These students will benefit from a safe, sustainable outdoor space to exercise and play."

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 4.5 million people who live within a half-mile of one of the sites. The need is critical in an area where 73 percent of low-income neighborhoods fail to meet the City's standard of 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

PS111 and Hell's Kitchen are no exception. The school, in an area almost devoid of parks, serves 600 kids, pre-K through 8thgrade, 80 percent of whom are eligible for free lunch and 75 percent of whom are considered at poverty level. As Benepe noted, The Trust for Public Land has done similar projects in other cities, including Philadelphia and San Francisco. The organization's next playground unveiling in New York City will be on June 25, at CS300/IS129 in the Tremont section of the Bronx.

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 nearly \$14 billion in investments planned 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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