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Department of Environmental Protection Partners With York College to Conduct Door-to-door Flooding Survey in Southeast Queens

200 Homes in Community Boards 12 and 13 will be Visited to Determine if the Properties have Experienced Flooding, the Severity and Frequency of the Problem, and What Might be Causing it

Photos are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today joined with Queens elected officials and York College to announce a new partnership that includes a door-to-door survey of 200 homes in southeast Queens to determine if the properties have experienced flooding, the severity and frequency of the problem, and what might be causing it. Beginning this week, 10 York College students, accompanied by DEP staff, will fan out across Community Boards 12 and 13 to interview homeowners who were identified through collaboration with community groups, elected officials and 311 data on flooding complaints. The door-to-door survey is expected to take three weeks to complete and DEP is funding the roughly \$50,000 initiative, including a stipend for each of the participating York College students.

"Mayor de Blasio has made the chronic flooding that so many families in southeast Queens confront a priority by proposing to spend \$1.5 billion to build out the sewer system over the next decade," said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. "Through this partnership with York College and elected leaders, the

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homeowner's survey will help us compile a database on the many factors that can contribute to flooding in different neighborhoods. This will inform the selection of the correct preventive measures for each individual neighborhood."

"I am honored that York College has been selected to participate in this important study," said **York College's Assistant Professor of Earth Sciences Dr. Ratan Dhar**, who has also served as a participating expert at several community meetings on the topic. "This is a great opportunity for our students to put into practice, what they have been learning in the classroom and in their field research. They will be contributing to the resolution of a long-standing problem in the very communities surrounding our campus."

"This door-to-door survey will collect detailed information that the DEP can use to develop better solutions for the chronic flooding that has damaged property and endangered lives in southeast Queens," said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. "Queens commends DEP Commissioner Lloyd for commissioning this important survey of homes in the area, and appreciates Professor Dhar and his York College students for undertaking this important outreach effort."

"This is a critical step in pinpointing the persistent flooding problems in our community," said **State Senator Leroy G. Comrie**. "I want to commend Commissioner Lloyd and her staff for involving York College and creating an opportunity for the school to use this project as a teaching tool."

"Thanks to Mayor de Blasio, southeast Queens finally has the funding to address the neglected infrastructure that has caused decades of flooding issues in our communities," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**, Chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection. "Identifying the hardest hit areas of our neighborhoods is an essential part in this process, so I'd also like to thank DEP and York College for making sure our efforts are targeted at the areas with the greatest need."

"This survey will prove to be an excellent learning tool, not only for DEP and city planners, but for the college students tasked with interviewing local residents," said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller (D-St. Albans)**. "I'm confident that this undertaking will help residents realize that DEP is responding to their concerns about the flooding issues here. I look forward to personally reviewing the results of the surveys."

Dr. Ratan Dhar, the principal investigator, has prepared the 10 students from his Environmental Health Science, Geology and Biology classes to conduct the intense door-to-door survey on flooding in Southeast Queens. Most of the students are in their junior or senior years and they have obtained their Responsible Conduct of Research and Human-Subjects-Research certifications through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiatives program. They have also received required training conducted by three borough coordinators (Queens, Manhattan and Staten Island) at York. Each team of two York students, along with their DEP partners, have been assigned up to 50 addresses to cover during the survey and two students will monitor all the teams. During the survey, homeowners will also be provided with information about how to properly dispose of grease. Grease can build up within the sewer system and cause blockages. Copies of the [Homeowner's Guide to Flood Preparedness](#), which provides specific tips on how homeowners can mitigate flooding on their property, will also be distributed.

The post-World War II commercial and residential development of southeast Queens outpaced the extension of the City's sewer system and many neighborhoods in the area are not yet equipped with catch basins or storm sewers to drain precipitation from the roadways. As part of DEP's \$6 billion, multi-year capital construction program to construct a comprehensive sewer system for the area, there are numerous projects either ongoing or in the planning and design phase. These include the final stages of the \$175 million Springfield Gardens upgrade that will be completed later this year and will bring nine miles of storm sewers and eight miles of sanitary sewers to the area. Also planned are a \$26 million upgrade for the Brookville Boulevard area, an \$18

million project that will bring high level storm sewers to the Twin Ponds neighborhood, and a \$5 million project to install an additional sewer line under 183rd Street at Jamaica Avenue.

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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