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City Set to Begin Largest Ever Expansion of the Bluebelt System on Staten Island

\$48 Million Project in the Woodrow Area Will Add Catch Basins and Storm Sewers to Reduce Street Flooding, Build New Wetlands and Allow Nearly 600 Homes to Connect to the City Sewer System

Photos of the Staten Island Bluebelt and a Map of the Work Area are Posted on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd and Department of Design and Construction (DDC) Deputy Commissioner Eric Macfarlane today announced that the largest ever expansion of the Staten Island Bluebelt will begin in the South Shore's Woodrow area later this spring. Currently, very few streets in this area are equipped with catch basins or storm sewers and roadway flooding often occurs during heavy rain storms. The \$48 million infrastructure upgrade will add more than three miles of storm sewers, install hundreds of catch basins, replace existing water mains, and include the largest ever expansion of the Bluebelt system. The catch basins will allow precipitation to drain from the roadways into the new storm sewers which will then direct it to the Bluebelt wetland where it will be naturally filtered to protect the environment. In addition, four miles of new sanitary sewers will be installed that will allow nearly 600 homes to connect to the City sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks. The project, which is expected to be completed in the fall of 2017, is being funded by DEP and will be managed by DDC.

"The Bluebelt system on Staten Island has proven to effectively manage stormwater and reduce localized flooding and we are excited to begin this \$48 million expansion of the program in Woodrow," said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. "The project will extend sewers to nearly 600 homes in the area and allow them to discontinue the use of septic tanks, which will reduce headaches for homeowners and raise the value of their properties."

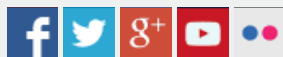
"The Bluebelt system has shown that stormwater can be managed quite effectively by enhancing Staten Island's existing streams, ponds, and marshes," said **DDC Deputy Commissioner Eric Macfarlane**. "This expansion of the Bluebelt will create a natural wetland to slow down, retain, and release stormwater into the ground, rather than sending it into the sewer system. In addition, this project will ensure that nearly 600 homeowners no longer have to deal with the constant hassle of maintaining septic tanks."

"I have spent a large part of my career pushing for the expansion of Bluebelts in areas where traditional sewers are not feasible," said **Borough President James Oddo**. "The simple fact is that Bluebelts help reduce flooding, they are environmentally friendly, and they help beautify communities. This project in Woodrow is good news for residents. I also look forward to working with the new administration at DEP to bring Bluebelts online in other communities that are

More Information

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looking forward to the benefits they provide.”

“The Bluebelt system continues to be a smart investment for the South Shore,” said **Council Minority Leader Vincent Ignizio**. “It protects our homeowners, our environment and our drinking water, while ensuring that the generations to come will continue to enjoy a great quality of life in our communities. I am grateful for the DEP and DDC partnership that makes sure these projects come to fruition.”

“The Bluebelt is one of the most innovative architectural developments on Staten Island, and it plays an essential role in the management of stormwater in our community,” said **Assembly Member Joseph Borelli**. “The storm sewers and catch basins will be welcome additions to flood-prone areas, and an expanded Bluebelt will be of great benefit to Staten Island.”

The installation of 15,059 linear feet of new storm sewers, 197 catch basins and 133 manholes will help to better manage the precipitation that falls in the area and reduce localized flooding. In addition, 23,278 linear feet of new sanitary sewers will allow 590 homes to connect to the City’s sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks.

The award winning Bluebelt program preserves natural drainage corridors such as streams and ponds, and optimizes them to help control and filter stormwater. As part of this project, the stormwater that is collected from local roadways will be directed to a new wetland that will be built on City-owned property at the east end of Sheldon Avenue. The work will include the planting of 723 canopy trees, 166 shrubs, 36,850 plants and wildflowers, and 115,000 square feet of seeding. The Bluebelt will hold and naturally filter the stormwater before it eventually drains into the Arthur Kill.

Over the last ten years DEP has built Bluebelts for approximately one third of Staten Island’s land area. In the South Richmond and mid-Island areas, the City has purchased approximately 400 acres of wetland property for Bluebelts that provide drainage for 19 watersheds, covering about 14,000 acres. The Bluebelts also provide important open spaces and serve as a habitat for diverse wildlife. Expanding the use of Bluebelts to reduce flooding and improve the water quality of New York Harbor is one of the operational goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation.

While the roadway is opened to add the new sewers the City will also upgrade the drinking water delivery system by replacing the old cast iron water mains with new ductile iron mains. As part of the project, 12,580 linear feet of 8 and 12-inch diameter distribution water mains will be installed. Upgrading the water main network will help to ensure a reliable supply of high quality drinking water for area residents and businesses.

A map depicting the work area can be viewed [here](#).

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 at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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