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Department of Environmental Protection Joins NYC Parks to cut the Ribbon on First Completed Community Parks Initiative Playground in Manhattan



Henry M. Jackson Playground on the Lower East Side, Reopens After \$1.9 Million Investment

Addition of Green Infrastructure Will Capture Stormwater and Help to Clean up the East River

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

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Tuesday joined NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, State Senator Daniel Squadron, Council Member Rosie Mendez, Manhattan Deputy Borough President Matthew Washington, Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou, Henry Street Settlement Executive Director David Garza, Manhattan Community Board 3 Chair Trevor Holland, Henry Street Settlement campers, and community members to cut the ribbon on the first neighborhood playground in Manhattan to be fully reconstructed under the [Community Parks Initiative \(CPI\)](#). The improvements to Henry M. Jackson Playground were funded by a \$1.9 million allocation through Mayor de Blasio's Community Parks Initiative, along with funding from NYC Parks' Parks Without Borders initiative, and nearly \$400,000 from DEP for green infrastructure improvements to absorb stormwater and improve the health of the East River.

Improvements to the playground include a new intermediate-sized basketball court and two junior courts with new hoops and backstops. The existing handball court was resurfaced, and painted lines delineate a mini-running track and volleyball area. As with many other CPI sites, DEP coordinated the installation of

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new green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff, including a storm chamber, permeable pavements and planting beds with shrubs, small trees and perennials, that are able to capture up to 45,000 gallons of stormwater with each rainfall. A storm chamber is an underground stormwater retention system that manages and controls the volume and discharge timing of stormwater runoff. In addition to detaining stormwater, storm chambers also recharge the ground water, maintain base flow and improve water quality while also providing natural filtration.

“NYC Parks works hard to provide New Yorkers a fair and balanced park system and every time we cut a ribbon to open a reconstructed playground like Henry M. Jackson, we come a little bit closer to fulfilling that mission,” said **Commissioner Silver**. “Parks and green spaces play critical roles in our wellbeing and thanks to ongoing Mayoral support through the Community Parks Initiative, we are able to bring major improvements to parks city-wide that have not received investment in decades.”

“The Community Parks Initiative serves as a model for how City agencies can partner to help ensure that New Yorkers get the biggest bang for their buck,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “DEP is funding the construction of green infrastructure within each park, which will help to improve the health of local waterways, such as the East River, and provide important amenities to communities that need them the most.”

“The Community Parks Initiative is bringing real improvements to neighborhood parks across the city—and it’s exciting to see CPI improvements in my district on the Lower East Side,” said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. “CPI was borne of the idea that all New Yorkers should have access to quality parks and open space in the neighborhoods. Making that idea a reality requires a citywide focus on parks equity, and I thank Commissioner Silver and the Parks Department, as well as Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Mendez, and my colleagues for that focus.”

“It’s exciting to be in this new playground,” said **Council Member Rosie Mendez**. “Just a couple of years ago, close to 100 people came to a meeting to make recommendations on how this park should be renovated. Their ideas were incorporated into the design, and now we have a playground for all in the community.”

Council Member Margaret Chin said: “Thanks to this \$1.9 million investment, Henry M. Jackson Playground will offer renovated basketball courts, handball courts, a mini-track, volleyball court and green infrastructure for Lower Manhattan families to enjoy. Our NYC parks serve as oases in our bustling urban jungle, providing open space where New Yorkers of all generations can find peace and relaxation, get exercise and build community. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Silver and Council Member Mendez and the hardworking members of the community for making the first Manhattan Community Parks Initiative project a success. I hope to see the Community Parks Initiative expand to more parks in District 1 and across the City.”

Almost all CPI sites are now in active construction and many of the first set of CPI sites are beginning to open this summer. CPI was initially launched in 2014, and is funded through 2019 with \$315 million in capital dollars funding renovations of more than 60 community parks that have not undergone significant improvements in decades. All of the parks and playgrounds that will receive improvements are in dense, fast-growing neighborhoods with an above-average percentage of residents living below the poverty level.

Capital program support for every CPI site comes from DEP, which has committed more than \$36 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations. 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 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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